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CHINESE RUBICON

ONLY a political moron could imagine that the vast events in China could pass with no "incidents" between East and West. A dynasty has passed; a new, Communist, dynasty is taking its place. A century of Western intrusion and domination is at its end; with it passes the sordid and moribund Chiang Kai-shek regime that to millions of Chinese has long seemed only the corrupt instrument of Western imperialism and Eastern humiliation. For us in Britain, the loss of brave and innocent life on the Yangtze is a shocking tragedy. We deeply resent the killing of sailors peacefully at work on what by custom we regard as their lawful occasions. Are we really so silly, however, as to expect Chinese Communist armies in the rush of a victorious campaign to behave as English gentlemen are supposed to do? We have to face the facts, and one of them is that we are now no more in a position to send armed warships up the Yangtze without permission of the Communist authorities than the Chinese are to sail up the Thames without asking permission from Whitehall.

Mr. Attlee's careful statement in the House on Tuesday showed that, while he was at one with all his countrymen in deploring this incident on the Yangtze, he appreciated the scale and significance of these unfolding events. Mr. Churchill, if he had not less informed followers behind him, would have been equally responsible and restrained. The Premier's statement made it clear that *Amethyst* and other warships were proceeding according to usual routine with no aggressive intentions. The suggestions made by the Communist radio that there was "a joint naval attack by the Kuomintang and the British Imperialist Navy" and an "attempt to halt the crossing of the People's Liberation Army" by the British Navy are, Mr. Attlee said, "as fantastic as they are unfounded." Even if the British were both foolish and wicked, they could not believe that a couple of sloops on the Yangtze would affect the advance of a huge and well-armed army. To us that is obvious. To millions of Chinese such charges of foreign intervention will not, unhappily, appear fantastic; they are already bitterly resentful of American aid to the Kuomintang and they look on the Yangtze as the main artery of British Imperialism in the past and the chief centre of British investment. They recall that it was the route through which British gunboats in 1926 played an important part in enabling Chiang Kai-shek to defeat the Chinese revolution.

The Communists could have crossed the Yangtze at any time during the past two months. They halted during peace negotiations and undoubtedly used the lull to strengthen their positions. During this period, Mr. Attlee said, the Commander on the spot had delayed sending up ordinary relief to Nanking and renewing supplies because of the anticipated termination of an armistice. When the armistice was extended, "opportunity was taken of that extension to effect the relief." And, in further support of the Commander on the spot, the Premier said that, had there been no incident, *Amethyst* would have reached Nanking before the expiry of the Communists' ultimatum to the Nationalists. This statement leaves room for the criticism that, since everyone expected the negotiations to break down and the Communists to attack across the Yangtze, it would have been wiser to send supplies by the railway—which was open to Nanking—or, for that matter, by a couple of Dakotas. (The notion that aircraft could in some way have been used for fighting is absurd.) The alternative, as Mr. Clement Davies urged, was to obtain a guarantee from both belligerents before the ship was sent.

Here is the root of the trouble. The British have been so used to doing what they like in China that they find it hard to accustom themselves to the necessity of going to anyone—least of all Communists—for permission to despatch warships where they choose. Again and again it has been suggested to the Government, notably by Lord Lindsay, that unofficial contacts should be established with the Communists.

Mr. Attlee tells us that local approaches have recently been rejected by the Communists. But we must establish relations, not at a consular level or with local commanders, but with the Peiping Government, which now controls a very large part of China.

Fortunately, the Government adopted the wise policy last December of keeping our Ambassador and consular officials at their posts; and we have throughout maintained a fair and free rule in Hongkong, where the British are on good terms with the Communists. There is nothing in Mr. Attlee's very careful and unprovocative statement to suggest any departure from this intelligent attitude. We may be to some degree encouraged to maintain it by the broadcast (made since the *Amethyst* incident) in which Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh urged that both Chinese and foreign nationals should carry on with their work without fear. "Foreign nationals," the statement adds, "must observe the laws and decrees of the People's Liberation Army and the People's Government."

With the Communist armies almost at the gates of Shanghai, there must be no further delay in making an effort at the highest level to establish terms of co-operation with the Communists. With overwhelming superiority and a large measure of popular support everywhere, their advance will continue at the pace which they decide for themselves. Chiang Kai-shek, supported by other discredited Kuomintang leaders, may make appeals to the people of South China to "resist to the last man," gambling desperately on the possibility of American support, even on the chance that, if resistance could be prolonged, China might become a vital military outpost in a war between America and the U.S.S.R. In the West no one, as far as we know, favours this particular brand of folly, except a group of American Senators, and an editorial writer in the *Economist*. The facts exclude the possibility of an effective intervention in Southern China. The danger is not that we or the Americans try to re-conquer China, but that by a futile policy of continuing to recognise Chiang Kai-shek or some other act of hostility, we may throw away the chance—which may not be good but which is the only one available—of continuing to exercise some influence in China and of maintaining friendship with large sections of the Chinese people.

Spanish Ally ?

When *The Times* can write that the Western Powers should now establish with Spain "the kind of contact on military and kindred matters which is made with other countries," and that "the object should be to bring Spain back step by step into the community of Western Europe," it is evident that Franco's stock has risen to an extent which would have seemed impossible two years ago. In December, 1946, the Assembly of the United Nations passed, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution recommending "that if, within a reasonable time, there has not been established [in Spain] a government which derives its authority from the consent of the governed . . . the Security Council shall consider the adequate measures to be taken in order to remedy the situation." This resolution, which will come up for review at the present session of the Assembly in New York, was never taken seriously by the Western Powers. As a sop to anti-Fascist sentiment, the British and Dutch Governments replaced their Ambassadors in Madrid by diplomatic representatives of a less honorific status; and Spain has been excluded from Western Union and from participation in Marshall Aid. But it was always clear that there was no intention in Washington or London to take any active steps, either by economic sanctions or even by lending moral support to the government in exile, to overthrow the Franco regime. Between toleration, however, of a detestable dictatorship which has suppressed the trade unions, crammed the jails with political prisoners, and which perpetuates its corrupt and incompetent administration by the firing squad and the garrotte, to concluding a military alliance with Franco, it is still a considerable step. If the United States, whose military experts have lately been examining the potentialities of the Spanish railways and aerodromes, choose to underwrite Franco in return for bomber bases in Spain and Spanish Morocco, there is nothing we can do about it. What the British Government can do is to veto the inclusion in the Atlantic Pact of a country whose entry would make nonsense of the profession that its signatories are out to preserve democracy and liberty. If the Pact is not to look like an aggressive alliance against the U.S.S.R., its signatories cannot afford to include a Fascist country which supplied Hitler with troops to fight in Russia. Britain and America protest when countries in Eastern Europe disregard the code of civil liberty; what semblance of moral and social integrity would remain to the Atlantic Pact if it included Fascist Spain?

Agreement at Bonn

Complete agreement following hard on what appeared to be complete deadlock at Bonn came as a surprise. With their knowledge that the "casual" talks between Mr. Malik and Dr. Jessup might be the prelude to a definite Russian proposal to lift the Berlin blockade in return for a firm promise of a Four-Power conference on Germany, the Foreign Ministers, at their meeting in Washington, evidently decided that a constitution for a West German State must not be delayed. They accordingly approved a conciliatory letter which the Military Governors were to deliver in Bonn promising "sympathetic consideration" to any proposals which struck a fair balance between the powers of the Federal Government and the *Länder*. Why this letter was not delivered for a fortnight has not been properly explained. Did the French have afterthoughts on the concessions M. Schuman made? Or did General Clay, relying on known differences between the State and War Departments in Washington, hold up delivery? However that may be, the Social-Democrats seem to have pressed effectively their demands on the key issue of central finance; and, having got their way, it appears, on such matters as Church rights, the Christian Democrats evidently felt that it was better to compromise than to have no constitution at all. It can now be anticipated that the general election will take place this summer; and, by next autumn, Military Government should have been abolished and the Western German State should be operating under the Occupation Statute—unless, of course, the German parties now decide to go slow until the Four-Power conference, if held, has either broken down or modified Germany's partition.

Milk Teeth for the Pact ?

Last week-end Mr. Johnson, U.S. Secretary of Defence, instructed the Navy Department to stop building the giant aircraft carrier whose keel had just been laid down, and on which $89 millions were to be spent. On the previous day Senator Connally had informed the press that the Administration had proposed to the Senate that $1,130 millions should be allocated for the provision of military aid to the European signatories of the Atlantic Pact in addition to $320 millions supplementary aid for Greece and Turkey. Spread from the North Cape to Sicily, the military aid suggested by Mr. Secretary Acheson would not go very far, particularly since deliveries are apparently to take largely the form of obsolescent American equipment. But it is increasingly doubtful whether Congress will in fact vote appropriations on the scale proposed. It is improbable that Congress will refuse to ratify the Pact itself; but several streams of opinion, whose influence should not be underrated, are converging in opposition to its military Lease-Lend pendant. There are, first, the opponents of European entanglements who agree with Senator Taft that arming the neighbours of the Soviet Union is an unnecessarily provocative step. Then there are the "realists," for whom the *Wall Street Journal* speaks, and who argue that the fate of military equipment dispatched to the Kuomintang should be an object lesson in view of the existence of strong pro-Russian fifth columns in Italy and France. Thirdly—and here Mr. Johnson's veto on Navy plans is significant—the heads of the U.S. Air Force appear to have convinced many Congressmen that reliance on long-range atom-bombing is a much more effective way of guaranteeing the integrity of Europe than arming Continental armies whose defeat would, in any event, be a foregone conclusion. Finally, there is the strong business lobby, whose contention is that, with depression deepening, it is imperative to stimulate enterprise by tax remissions, even at the cost of curtailing drastically military aid to Europe. In the long run, no doubt, armament orders for American heavy industry may come to be regarded in Congress as the most effective way of pump-priming the U.S.A. out of a slump; but, at this stage, the reaction of businessmen to the recession seems to be to demand Federal economies and lower taxes, even if military aid for Europe has to be drastically cut. All in all, it looks as if the Atlantic Pact, so far as its European signatories are concerned, will only be provided at America's expense with a modest set of milk teeth.

Word of Five Letters

Estimating that unemployment in the United States now exceeds four million, *Fortune* observes that, though polysyllabic periphrases are now fashionable, the situation would have been described in a less sophisticated age by a simple, five-letter word—slump. If such a description be intended to connote conditions resembling the crisis of 1930, then *Fortune's* pessimism seems exaggerated: there is no indication yet of catastrophic collapse in the American economy, nor is it yet certain that a "slump" cannot be averted, or at least postponed, by Federal expenditure. Nevertheless, the traditional signs of deepening depression are accumulating. The decline in the price of farm products has now extended to metals and oil; retail sales continue to fall; a sharp contraction in outstanding bank loans points to a general reduction in business turnover; real estate values have begun to drop and there is evidence of a growing tendency on the part both of producers and consumers to become "depression-minded." In short, it is clear that in the United States to-day there are all the makings of a situation which is likely to have unwelcome repercussions both on this country and on other recipients of Marshall Aid.

Canadian Wheat Problem

Immediately, prospects are that, as conditions of "over-production" develop in the United States, there will be increasing pressure from Congress on the Administration to use the European Recovery Programme as a means for exporting American unemployment. Already the proposed extensions (admittedly on a somewhat grandiose scale) of oil-refining capacity in Europe have become the subject of E.C.A. criticism. More important, it has been announced in Washington that no further authorisations will be made permitting Britain to purchase Canadian wheat with Marshall dollars so long as stocks in the United States are sufficient to meet all export demands. The effect is that, over the remaining fifteen months of the Anglo-Canadian wheat contract, we shall have to pay for Canadian wheat with "earned" dollars; and, though it may be possible to switch some of our share of Marshall Aid to the purchase of goods whose import is at present financed by earned dollars, a serious disruption of Anglo-Canadian trade seems inevitable. Indeed, wheat apart, our ability to maintain our present purchases of Canadian dairy products—a vital element in our two-way trade with the Dominion—may be equally prejudiced if, as seems likely, cheese is also declared, this summer, to be "surplus" in the United States.

Overvalued Sterling ?

The effects, however, of a real depression in the United States will not be confined to the question of "off-shore" purchases with Marshall dollars. In so far as declining prices of farm products in the U.S.A. lead to a general fall in the world price of foodstuffs, Sir Stafford Cripps can perhaps look to some lightening of the Treasury's burden of subsidies required to stabilise the British cost of living, though bulk-purchase contracts stretching over a considerable period ahead are bound to slow up our enjoyment of this advantage. What is certain is that in every export market in the capitalist sector of the world American competition will be intensified. The problem of the growing disparity between American and British prices is also bound to arise. Eighteen months ago wholesale prices in the United States were 30 per cent. higher than in this country; to-day they are 13 per cent. lower. If this development, with its obvious influence on the competitive attractions of British manufactured exports, continues, it will become necessary to consider whether the present foreign exchange relationship between sterling and dollars can be sustained. Only last week-end, Mr. John Snyder, Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, voiced once more a view which has long been held in American banking circles that, between now and the end of E.R.P., several European currencies may have to be devalued. Devaluation has been consistently opposed by the Labour Government as a dangerous short-cut out of Britain's economic troubles; but the inverse movement in British and American price indices is a warning to Sir Stafford that he may have to choose between "looking the dollar in the face" and abandoning the present conception of British price stability.

Economic Crisis in Israel

The demonstration by unemployed immigrants in Tel Aviv is a symptom of the grave economic crisis which is developing in Israel. Ever since controls broke down in the last weeks of the Mandate, prices have soared. During the war, this scarcely mattered—inflation is the normal method of paying for wars. But now that peace talks have begun, a peacetime economy must be rapidly established. This will be very difficult. The country is flooded by immigrants, many of whom are totally unsuitable for productive work in industry and agriculture; the Army is being demobilised and there is a threat of large-scale unemployment. Both wages and the general standard of living are far too high for a country which, even more than Britain, will have to export or perish. It is no surprise that Mr. Ben Gurion himself has taken personal responsibility for putting over the austerity programme which is now being worked out in the Cabinet. Israeli Socialism is facing a crisis similar to our own in July, 1947. There is no reason to believe that it cannot be overcome, though this may involve the introduction of immigration quotas designed to give workers preference over drones. Austerity will also provide the first test of the political stability of the new State. On the extreme Left the Mapam and on the extreme Right the Heruth (the Fascist Nationalists) are both formidable opponents since they particularly appeal to the militant youth. And they are likely to exploit the crisis with considerable irresponsibility. The next six months will provide an even severer test of Ben Gurion's leadership than the war itself.

Wages Front

It is doubtful whether the T.U.C. General Council's qualified re-endorsement of the wage-stop will allay unrest on the industrial front. Apart from the railways, there are several other big, unsettled issues. The Cotton Manufacturing Commission has issued this week a report in which it presses strongly for the general adoption of the new wage system that has been under test in a number of Lancashire mills, and also for the "redeployment" of labour which the new way of reckoning wages is meant to bring about. The Commission argues that under the existing system many weavers are underworked, and that redeployment, with the new wage pattern, would enable most weavers to earn more than at present, while reducing production costs and increasing the total output of woven products. Indeed, the Commission contends that the adoption of the new methods is the only way of saving Lancashire's export trade by bringing costs down to an internationally competitive level. The Trade Unions will now have to make up their minds, in the light of the experiment carried through by agreement at 39 mills, whether to put their weight behind the new plan. Meanwhile, another section of the Lancashire workers has shown itself in militant mood. The Lancashire miners are refusing to continue the arrangements for overtime and Saturday shift work unless their claims for "miner's coal" are met. On yet another sector of the "wages front" the big claim of the Post Office workers has been before the National Arbitration Tribunal this week. It is something of a test case, because the postal workers are arguing that the Government's decision no longer to hold the cost of living stable releases them from the wages stop, and entitles them to press their demands, which, in response to the Government's appeals, were previously held back.

A Policeman's Lot

The Oaksey Report on police pay and conditions of service is workmanlike, thorough, and exhaustive. It is so exhaustive, indeed, in its attention to the minor anomalies and irritations of police life as to lend force to the complaint that its recommendations about pay increases could well have been made months ago, as an interim measure dictated by the urgency of the recruiting problem. The pay proposals are sound if unspectacular—and thirteen shillings a week below the rate asked for by the Police Federation. The extra twenty-two shillings for the constable will not restore him to his pre-war position, but in conjunction with the increased allowances for extra duty, detective work, "acting" ranks, and metropolitan cost-of-living, it may attract recruits. The Committee are undoubtedly right in saying, not only that the value of the policeman's "concealed emoluments" (free accommodation, free clothing and footwear, and a generous pension scheme) tends to be under-estimated by the men, but also that it "is not fully appreciated by potential recruits or the public in general." That they have kept their eyes on the recruit rather than the man nearing pensionable age is clear from the fact that, while recommending no change in the pension scales or the men's contributions, they propose that men now eligible to retire shall be required to serve another three years to earn pensions based on the new scales of pay. "Our terms of reference," they say, "require us to consider the subject in the light of the need to attract recruits"; and they are well aware that about 7,000 men of all ranks have probably been waiting to retire on the new basis, whatever it turned out to be. These will be disappointed, and they will also note that a proposal to make policemen pay more for their pensions is deferred merely because it might be impolitic at present. Perhaps the weakest thing in the report is its proposal that the widow's pension be increased from the niggardly 15s. to a mere £1 a week, and the suggestion that, if the men dislike this, they should used their increased pay to start a widows' pension scheme of their own.

PARLIAMENT: War and Pensions

Wednesday

FIFTY centuries looked down from the Gallery as the Chinese Ambassador, unmoving, listened to the Prime Minister's statement on the Yangtze attacks. But after an hour, when the questions had become aimless and repetitious, he leaned wearily against the rail. Perhaps in his mind's eye he saw the shrinking Nationalist line, the millions of Communists moving across the river, the desolate future of defeat which Question Hour seemed impotent to change.

The Prime Minister, flanked by the Minister of Defence and the Foreign Secretary, made it clear from the start that the Government took collective responsibility for the naval operations in China. Churchill, looking rather pale, was obviously torn between the feeling that the presence of the ships in the Yangtze was a blunder, and that if a blunder had to be made, it should have sufficient air-cover to prevent national prestige from suffering. The general criticism of the timing of the operation was later summed-up by a Member who asked whether it would have seemed opportune in 1944 if the Chinese Navy had sent a gun-boat up the Channel on D-day—or even the day before.

The Tory brigadiers kept asking why there was no adequate air-support for the vessels. The Prime Minister twice replied that *Amethyst* was engaged on her lawful occasions, and not on a punitive expedition. When Head persisted that the House could only draw one inference, Socialists completed the sentence by shouting "—that the Tories want war."

Yet there was strict logic in the Tory argument. The British gun-boat used to be able to move on peaceful missions in Chinese waters precisely because she was capable of destroying potential attackers. Instead of a warship without air cover, better, surely, have sent an unarmed supply ship. What emerged from the questions and answers was that, as the Americans have realised, intervention with limited liability in China is no longer feasible, and that the "punitive expedition"—the half-way house between war and diplomacy—is not a practicable instrument of Anglo-Chinese intercourse.

Whatever the uneasiness of the House about the wisdom of the Yangtze operations, there was no doubt about the courage of the men who carried them out, and Jim Simmons, the New Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Pensions, was able to give rapid assurance, in the debate on a Liberal Motion to set up a Royal Commission on War Pensions, that the dependants of the killed and wounded would receive full war pension benefits. Simmons had a strong case to put for the Government. After asking indulgence for his maiden ministerial speech, he laid about the Tories without restraint. To Vice-Admiral Taylor, a would-be interruptor, Simmons said, "Get back on the quarter-deck, will you!"

This naturally angered Winterton who, on a point of order, asked whether a Minister is entitled to say to an Hon. Member, "Get back into your pew!" Nor did Simmons have any more success with the Noble Lord when, quoting Wilfred Pickles, he suggested that the Ministry of Pensions' slogan was "Give him the money, Barney." "Who is barmy?" asked Lord Winterton.

Commander Pursey rose to make a lively but unpopular attack on the British Legion, and a first-rate, brilliantly documented defence of the Ministry of Pensions. Pursey, one of the third generation of ex-servicemen in his family, was mildly heckled at first. Long charged with making an unvarying speech about the British Legion whether the debate was on groundnuts or bulk-buying, Pursey unbuttoned himself and gave the House in the course of an hour the very prototype of his Legion speeches.

Sir Ian Fraser made a fair, well-balanced speech with an earnest attempt to make it "non-political." Yet, however sincere his object, there was no doubt that the campaign for a Select Committee had been used by many for political ends. It was a pity that the Minister of Pensions, Marquand, did not make his speech, describing the benefits and work of his Department for ex-servicemen, many months ago. Had he done so, the debate would have been unnecessary, and many Labour Members who had signed Fraser's original motion, would have felt less embarrassed.

MAURICE EDELMAN

AIRLIFT TO ARGUMENT

Once again, having drifted to the edge of war, both sides seem ready to try out cautiously the possibility of an agreed solution. This is the most likely interpretation of the simultaneous but unco-ordinated revelation by the State Department and by Tass that negotiations have been proceeding at Lake Success for the lifting of the Berlin blockade and the resumption of the Foreign Ministers' Conference on Germany. It is too early yet to state that the Conference will be resumed, far less to assess its prospects of success. But the mere fact that Washington and Moscow should be discussing its date is itself of very real importance. What has produced this change?

On the Russian side the setback in Europe has been serious. Ever since Molotov walked out of the Paris Conference and set the Cominform the task of sabotaging the Marshall Plan, Russian policy has only created what it sought to prevent. Both the American isolationists, who detest the Atlantic Pact, and the Left-wing forces in Europe, who suspect it for very different reasons, have been silenced by a Russian diplomacy calculated to make anti-Communist hysteria the mainspring of policy. Success of the air-lift and the obvious determination of the Western Powers to go ahead with the formation of an independent German State have made it clear to the Russians that any further prolongation of the deadlock beyond this summer would make the division of Germany irrevocable. From Stalin's point of view a resumption of negotiations is clearly desirable if attainable without too much loss of prestige.

On the Western side also, despite the air-lift and the superficial success of Western Union, there are good reasons for postponing the complete break with Russia which the election and installation of a West German government next September would involve. Recovery in Western Europe under the Marshall Plan has not been matched either by any real economic integration or by the expansion of East-West trade which alone could give it permanence; and that recovery is now threatened by the world effects of the growing American depression. Further, despite the surprising last-minute agreement at Bonn, it is clear that the Western Germans must always strive for the unification of Germany and so remain a factor of instability in any Western Union.

These are some of the motives which have stirred Mr. Acheson and Mr. Vyshinsky to seek a formula for resuming discussions of a German peace treaty. But the mere desire to avoid total re-armament is not sufficient to produce peace. What is needed on both sides is an atmosphere in which strategic planning takes second place to policy and the Chiefs of Staff are subordinated to civilian Ministers. It is possible that the shuffle in the Kremlin, as Mr. Truman has hinted on occasion, has had this effect. It is certain that the retirement of Mr. Marshall and Mr. Forrestal, the transfer of control of German affairs from the War to the State Department and the ascendancy of Mr. Acheson in the President's Council have resulted in a real shift of power in Washington and permitted a discussion, at least, of the conditions of peace.

What is vital at this juncture is that British influence should be used unreservedly to assist these saner councils. There are cynics who argue that Britain can only survive by exploiting American-Russian tension and making American "aid against Communist aggression" a permanency. If this were so, Britain would be self-condemned as the main cause of the third world war. But the argument is nonsensical. The lesson of the last two years is that no country of Western Europe has any chance of permanent recovery so long as East-West trade declines and re-armament increases. An agreement to neutralise Germany as a factor in the military balance of power is a condition of our survival as independent nations. This cannot be achieved by trying to go back to the Potsdam agreement, but only by completely re-writing it in terms of the new German conditions which have developed since 1945. It is to be hoped that Mr. Bevin will not waste time chewing over his old disagreements with the Russians about Germany, but has already prepared new and constructive proposals for an agreement to disagree.

THE BLACK SCAR

[This is the fourth of a series of articles by Mr. R. H. S. Crossman, M.P., on the political role of American Labour.]

The Negro problem runs like a gash across the body of American democracy. In the South, the wound is still gaping. But the scars stretch also to California, New England and the Great Lakes; and even here, where at first sight it seems to have healed, the scab merely conceals the fester. The poison is in the blood-stream.

It is futile to believe that the American Labour Movement can provide a brand new anti-toxin. The trade unions themselves, are deeply infected. In the Railway Brotherhoods, for instance, as well as in many A.F. of L. Unions, discrimination is practised on principle, Negroes being admitted only to menial jobs and organised in separate Locals (*Anglice*, Union Branches). In the C.I.O. the situation is better—in theory at least; and, though practice often falls behind theory, the acceptance of the principle of racial equality is of the greatest importance. In this respect, Walter Reuther, the Auto Workers' leader, is far ahead of the rest of the labour leadership.

There is, of course, a strictly functional reason for non-discrimination in industrial unions, as opposed to craft unions—a depressed Negro class depresses the wages of semi-skilled white workers—but Reuther's motives are not purely economic. He believes passionately in Social-democracy as an ideal, and it is his political approach to labour problems which has made him a protagonist of Civil Rights. In Detroit the advance is real; race riots no longer start, where they used to start, inside the factory. That is a magnificent achievement, though no one is sure whether, if unemployment were to return, Reuther could prevent his White members from demanding that the Negroes should lose their jobs first. Unlike the A.F. of L., the C.I.O. Unions have never lived through a slump.

Reuther realises that it is not enough to disinfect the workshops when the disease is rampant outside. During the war, hundreds of thousands of Negroes moved northwards, attracted by the wages in the war factories. In addition to its Polish colony, which lives in its own separate town of Hamtramck in the middle of the city, Detroit has its huge pockets of Negroes, who make up 28 per cent. of the population. They live huddled together in blighted areas—tumbledown shacks or "White" houses which have "come down in the world." With low wages —even the U.A.W. cannot prevent the Negro from usually having the worst-paid job—and much higher rents than Whites pay, they create slums wherever they go. When the Negro has "blighted" an area, the landlord has no incentive to repair his property, whose value is automatically reduced by coloured tenancy. His aim, whether he is Negro or White, is to get what money he can while the house stands, and by fair means or foul to prevent the Negro from filtering into "good" property.

Nothing is more astonishing to an English visitor than the normal American attitude to housing. Here the respect for the rights of private profit-making, the corruption of City and State politics, the power of the lobbyist (the real estate lobby takes second place only to the farm lobby), all combine to produce a deadly and growing blight, whose most violent expression is the race riot. In Britain we have come to regard housing, like water, gas, electricity and education, as a public service. In America, apart from a tiny number of Federal projects—charity buildings whose inmates must belong to the lowest income groups —public housing and town planning have scarcely begun. About 7,000 of Chicago's teeming millions live on Federal housing estates and, when the city does clear a slum, it must sell the site to a private company for commercial exploitation. Federal action for soil conservation and river control has now been widely accepted as part of the American way of life; but only a few politically conscious Labour leaders realise that a gigantic Federal housing programme and social security are necessary to preserve the cities from the blight spreading round their hard, sparkling centres.

The fact is that equality for the Negro cannot be achieved, as some Northern Liberals imagine, simply by "do-good" committees and Federal laws against discrimination. There is a good deal in the Southerner's complaint that the Yankee, who reads him moral lectures, has a beam in his own eye. Civil Rights must be not only legislated but paid for; and this involves sacrifices by the vested interests of free enterprise in the North as well as in the South. True, the Negro in the North can vote freely, ride in the same street-car as the White man, and even sit next him in the cinema. But, despite these political and social rights, his position is growing worse. The race issue is not a special problem of the South, but the most dangerous symptom of a social malady which affects the whole country, and which can only be cured by planning, applied consciously and deliberately to agriculture, industry and civic life.

What of the South itself? I had expected to find among the liberals there a sense of hopelessness and futility, in contrast with the dynamism of Northern Labour. Instead, I found that, in a sense, the South is now *the* area of social change, where liberalism may well make its most spectacular advances in the next ten years. Industrialisation, accompanied, of course, by unionisation, is rapidly undermining the old order in the towns; while, in the countryside, the mechanical cotton-picker and the flame-throwing weed-killer is producing a similar revolution.

The Long and Talmadge regimes in Louisiana and Georgia are typical reflexes of this social change. In the last ditch, reaction takes on its most garish forms. But the Southern reactionary, even while he filibusters successfully, knows that his cause is lost. Nothing was more interesting in Atlanta, Georgia, than the defensiveness of the business men with whom I talked, their suppressed sense of guilt, and their awareness that, sooner rather than later, they must grant the Negroes political freedom. In contrast, the liberal and Labour organisers whom I met are no longer martyrs in heroic exile, but spokesmen of a better future. History is on their side.

At present, however, this Southern Labour-liberalism works under terrible difficulties. Self-segregation is by now an enduring Negro trait. In the magnificent Negro University of Atlanta, Georgia, I met a Nigerian who had worked in the library for two years. When I asked him about race relations in the U.S.A., he was tongue-tied, and I found out later that he had never stepped outside the Negro campus. In the unions, the mixed Local is rare enough; and, even when it has been established, as often as not the Negroes still sit together at the back of the hall. Even Reuther's U.A.W. fails to overcome this when it moves South. One Georgia organiser glumly told me that many of his members were Ku-Klux-Klansmen, while the A.F. of L., as I found, is up to its neck in Talmadge politics. As for the countryside, the poverty and peonage, under which the Poor White and the Negro suffer equally, are exploited by the ruling caste to set one against the other.

And yet I am certain that the Southern social revolution is now under way. Northern politics, even in Labour circles, has a hard ring, which is a true reflection of Northern values. In the South, despite the moody violence of race hatred, politics are more human; and the survival of Protestantism, even in its primitive forms, gives them a basis of Christian ethics, which has made possible the astonishing experiments conducted under the T.V.A. Although it was created by Northerners, the T.V.A. is essentially Southern in its dislike of greatness for its own sake (there is no T.V.A. skyscraper in Knoxville, but only some modest offices, scattered about in half a dozen buildings); in its determination to bring a civilised small-scale industry to the upland valleys, instead of forcing the farmer's son to leave home for the big city; and in its preference for decentralisation, even when centralised control may well be more "efficient."

Directly, the T.V.A. has done nothing on the race issue; indeed, the great Fontana Dam, dedicated nobly to the American people, has separate drinking fountains for coloured and White people. But, in the long run, T.V.A. may be more helpful to the Negro than Civil Rights imposed, like prohibition, against the will of the majority. For the T.V.A. is the greatest experiment ever made in planned, democratic living. It has used Federal power not to dragoon people from the centre but to educate them to manage their own affairs. Despite its absolute ban on "payroll politics," it has mobilised the enthusiastic support of seven Southern Legislatures. I cannot help thinking that, in a framework of this sort, race hatred, along with a hundred other social problems, can be dealt with more radically than in the slums of the Northern cities.

The fact is that, because the South has never had either political democracy or the full development of *laissez-faire* industrialism, its "New Liberals," though few in numbers, are far less inhibited in their attitude to social planning. Policy was something which I found it very difficult to discuss in the Northern cities. There, Labour politics is a matter of organisation, tactics and personalities; and, apart from Reuther, there is hardly a trade union leader who realises the need for policy, as distinct from an electoral platform.

But, if you live in Georgia or Alabama, you know how little you will have achieved by enabling the Negro to vote, or even by abolishing economic discrimination against him. There it is impossible to avoid seeing that the conservation of America's spiritual and material resources can only be achieved by a combination of Federal action and regional democracy; the Negro problem is only one facet of this task.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

THE PARIS DOVECOTE

It was hard at first for journalists, cooped up in the stuffy balcony of the Salle Pleyel, to assess just what was happening on the floor below. The World Peace Congress did not fit into a normal pattern. At times, as the delegates rose to cheer, blinking in the kleig lights, it seemed like a colossal Hollywood set. The mood changed, and the audience sat rigid, as the mother of a famous Soviet partisan, murdered by the Nazis, broke down on the rostrum and wept. Then the flash-bulbs popped as O. John Rogge, a prominent colleague of Henry Wallace, went to the microphone: for a moment you were at an election rally in Madison Square Garden. Yet two incidents, early on, helped to make things clear.

Garry Davis, who has appointed himself as the first world-citizen, and has thus qualified, in the Soviet view, as a "cosmopolite," asked if he could speak. "No," said Abbé Boulier, on behalf of the Congress organisers. Mr. Davis was incapable of making any distinction between the two blocs in a divided world. The Congress, on the contrary, thought it quite wrong to lump the non-aggressive Soviet bloc together with imperialist warmongers.

There was a similar answer for those who, like Konni Zilliacus, suggested that responsibility for the drift to war might rest on both sides. Zilliacus, for more than two hours, delivered an erudite and intelligent speech, criticising the Atlantic Pact as a breach of the Uno Charter, attacking U.S. imperialism and, in general, saying very well the things most of the delegates understood and appreciated. But he insisted that the Labour Party was not a war party and that "the greatest victory for peace in Britain would be the re-election of Labour." Later that day, Ehrenburg was chatting to some journalists. "What," asked one, "do you think about Zilliacus's suggestion that both sides are to blame?" Ehrenburg smiled, and said: "If a friend visits a house and finds the husband and wife quarrelling, he tells each of them that the other is to blame, and so tries to patch up the quarrel. We do not mind anyone trying to do the same." He paused. Then he added quietly: "Even if the husband is a wife-beater."

These two incidents, I believe, fairly reflect both the tone and the purpose of the Congress. For five days the demands for peace went on, booming over the heads of more than two thousand delegates from some sixty countries, filtering through head-phones clacking in half-a-dozen languages, relayed by radio to Prague, where hundreds more delegates from Eastern Europe and China, refused admission by the French, were holding a similar gathering. This Congress was not intended to be a "forum for academic debates," or even for the kind of "intellectual" controversy that arose at Wroclaw. The delegates made that clear by their vocal protests when John Rogge, peering past the beam in his American eyes, saw the motes in theirs, though they relented later and put him on the permanent committee. They also showed their suspicion that one or two other delegates from the West had mistaken the Congress for the counter-demonstration being held this week in Paris by anti-Communists to voice their opposition to Dictatorship as well as War. Yet this meeting was more than a grand jamboree where comrades and "friends" could meet for occupational oratory. It really was an international rally by proxy—on a massive scale.

Many of the "friends," it is true, were absent. Zilliacus, answering the charge that the Congress was Communist-dominated, pointed out that invitations had been sent to many non-Communists who had refused to attend. But it was not free choice that had kept some away. The French Government—to which the Congress was to serve, in part, as a display of powerful opposition—had become very choosy. The delegations from Eastern Europe were pared to the bone. Other peace partisans had been stopped at the frontier. Up to the end, delegates were jumping over immigration and other hurdles to swell the crowd at the Salle Pleyel, though some, like Mulk Raj Anand in India, had their passports confiscated to prevent them from leaving home.

It was a delegate from Eastern Europe who pointed out one aspect of the Congress that escaped attention in the West. He was talking to a critical journalist who was arguing that, in England and America at least, everyone knew that this was a Communist front, thinly disguised by the non-partisan dove which Picasso had drawn as its emblem. "Suppose you are right," said this delegate, "you are still overlooking two things. First, you must admit that the support from this so-called front is pretty astonishing. Secondly, you are blinded by insularity. Western Europe, even England, remains the centre of your political universe. You do not understand that the balance is tipping away from you to Asia, to Latin America and to all the colonial areas. While you hold the fort for American imperialism in Europe, that same imperialism is taking over your old role all round the world. You are cynical and sophisticated: you find the speeches here repetitious to the point of dull unanimity: it makes no impression on you when a Negro or a Chinese or an Arab is accepted here as an equal and finds people willing to help his struggle for independence and for peace. You forget that this struggle is on a world scale. A mass movement among the Indian peasants may prove more important historically than a battalion-exercise by European professors."

This, I think, helps to explain the apparent paradox of the ovation with which a peace congress greeted the capture of Nanking. This was not a convention of pacifists. On the contrary, one of the first announcements was an invitation for all veterans of the Spanish Civil War to attend a reunion. The purpose of the Congress, clearly, was three-fold. First, it served as a test of strength for the opposition to the Atlantic Powers which, in the eyes of the majority of delegates and of the sponsors, bear the responsibility for the East-West crisis. Secondly, it established a nominal centre from which a campaign against a new capitalist war could be launched on a front broader than the one on which the Communists could deploy their own forces. Thirdly, it rallied all the groups which could be counted on, not merely to be partisans of peace but also to be partisans of the Soviet bloc if, in spite of everything, the final fight had to be faced. You can take all this cynically, like the American journalist who said to me: "These damned Communists want peace, sure—so that they can beat us without fighting." But, throughout the speeches denouncing the "imperialists," one could sense a desperate anxiety to prevent the cold war from breaking into open conflict, and an intense desire on the part of the Eastern European delegates, at least, to be able to go on building their own kind of Socialism without outside intervention. Merely because Picasso's dove seems to have flown from a Communist dovecote, it would be foolish to belittle their sincerity.

Certainly, the immense crowd at the Buffalo stadium on Sunday cannot be dismissed as a Machiavellian conspiracy. Had they been enticed there to warn the French Cabinet of the domestic obstruction a war against the U.S.S.R. would encounter? That may well be true. But these people—and the millions for whom they were proxies—genuinely believe that aggression is a monopoly of the West and reject entirely the idea that the West is in any danger. Under present conditions, it was inevitable that this Congress should be at once a peace rally and an important encounter in the cold war.

Paris. NORMAN MACKENZIE

A LONDON DIARY

THERE has been no dramatic surprise about this Commonwealth Conference. No expert in devising a "formula" was needed. India said she would be a republic, but wanted to remain in the Commonwealth. That has been agreed; the formula is a bald, but convincing, statement that, as a republic, India will be a member of a Commonwealth, accepting as its symbolic head a King to whom she does not owe allegiance.

* * *

Will some other Dominions, for instance, Ceylon, follow suit? It may. But far more important, and never mentioned here, is the possibility that Mr. Malan will speedily use the precedent as the basis of an electoral cry in South Africa. Some say that he hopes for a Republic within twelve months. If this happens, South African liberalism will be completely dished. No one will be left to fight the Natives' battle when Malan finally establishes his complete Nationalist racial State. At present the Senate holds him up and he only has a narrow majority in the Lower Chamber. If he goes to the country on the Republican issue, and is able to show that the British will readily agree to another republic in the Commonwealth, then he will certainly turn his present narrow majority into a solid working one. In that case he will be able to put through his projected Constitution which makes the President answerable to no one but God, and enables him to procure an entirely subservient Assembly. The Natives will then have no recourse except to Communism.

* * *

On another page Mr. Desmond MacCarthy writes to protest against the "undemocratic" trick used by the Labour Party to achieve a working majority on the L.C.C. and asks what the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION thinks about it. In the week of the election I discussed Mr. Hayward's handling of the affair in this Diary and remarked that "it only confirmed suspicion about boss-rule in County Hall which had already cost the London Labour electoral support." Curiously enough Mr. MacCarthy's protest seems to miss the real violation of democracy committed by Mr. Hayward. There is nothing undemocratic in resolving a constitutional deadlock such as developed at County Hall by electing aldermen so that one side has a working majority. One of the few justifications for the existence of Aldermen is that they come in useful on this sort of occasion, and I am sure that, if this arrangement had been in anyway improper, Sir Percy Harris would never have consented to it. It is a matter of opinion whether the L.C.C. is better managed by a system of "Government and Opposition" or by inter-Party co-operation and the sharing of Committee Chairmanships which are the practice in some great cities. The balance of argument is pretty even, and there are plenty of Conservatives who agree with Mr. Hayward in preferring the plan which places the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of one Party and so gives the voter a clear choice of policies when it comes to elections. What did smack of "boss-dom" was Mr. Hayward's autocratic announcement of his cut-and-dried plan an hour after the results were announced and before he had consulted either with his own Party colleagues or with Sir Percy and the Tory Opposition. Mr. MacCarthy suggests that Mr. Hayward was "wriggling out of the verdict of the L.C.C. electors and sees no difference between that and manipulating the balance." But the electorate had given no verdict in favour of sharing Chairmanships in a novel situation! Under our tradition of representative Government it is for the elected Counsellors to use their discretion in solving such problems. Mr. Hayward was undemocratic not in his treatment of the voters but in his hoity-toity attitude to the L.C.C.

* * *

Archie Johnstone, editor of *British Ally*, the Russian language paper published in Moscow by the British Government, who has renounced his nationality and become a Russian citizen, is a wayward, romantic Scot who in previous centuries would have been a soldier of fortune. A journalist, who was on the staff of the *News Chronicle* in the 'thirties, he and his wife "cut the painter" and went off to Spain in 1935 to run an attractive *pension* on the Catalan coast. It became a cheerful rendezvous for Fleet Street holiday-makers. As Spaniards-by-adoption (but not by naturalisation) they went into exile with the Republicans in Mexico, where they started another hotel. Johnstone rejoined the *News Chronicle* in 1946 as a sub-editor, but, an accomplished linguist with an affection for Russia, he jumped at the chance which the Foreign Office gave him of going to Moscow to run *British Ally*. "Run" may be an exaggeration, since the copy is provided and the contents decided by the Central Office of Information under close directive, and editing it is largely a make-up job. In his 3,000-word letter to *Pravda* renouncing his citizenship, he denounced his masters. But why he should have been "astonished" at being asked to print anti-Soviet speeches by Attlee, Bevin and Morrison (except as inconsistent with the title of the paper) it is difficult to imagine; *British Ally* is avowedly a Government mouthpiece. It is difficult to imagine Archie as a party-line Communist; I should describe him as an uninhibited Scottish radical.

* * *

It is a long and dangerous step from purging Communists from "Security" jobs in the civil service to firing employees in a business for their political opinions. Yet this is what will be done by the John Lewis Partnership unless the stupid and obnoxious decision taken this week is reversed. I notice that when the Central Council, representing the employees, accepted Colonel Thornton-Kemsley's motion calling for the dismissal of all workers in the chain department stores who refuse to sign an anti-Communist declaration, it refused to extend the same principle to Fascists. Is political opinion to be made a test of capacity to sell lampshades? Is anyone's security endangered by a Red carpet salesman? This smacks too much of the Nuremberg Laws to me, or of the economic discrimination practised against Negroes in the U.S.

* * *

So far the U.S. "loyalty" programme has cost £4,450,000. In return for that 2,350,000 Federal employees have been "screened." In only 7,700 of the records was anything suspicious found; of these, disloyalty charges were brought against 1,300, of whom 134 resigned and another 103 were found by the review boards to be ineligible for Government employment, and of these several were reinstated on appeal. Altogether 200 were "purged." Some Senators think that at £22,250 per purgee, they are not getting their money's worth. But that is not the complaint of liberty-loving Americans; they are uneasy about even the 200. (I take these statistics from a speech by Professor Cushman, of Cornell University, whose speech to the American Physical Society is reported in the American *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.) Here are some of the questions suspects were asked.

Do you read a good many books?
What books do you read?
What magazines do you read?
What newspapers do you buy or subscribe to?
Do you think that Russian Communism is likely to succeed?
How do you explain the fact that you have an album of Paul Robeson in your home?
Do you ever entertain Negroes in your home?
Do you believe that Negro blood should be segregated in the Red Cross blood bank?

One employee was asked: "Is it not true that you lived next door to, and, therefore, were closely associated with a member of the I.W.W.?

When he replied that it was true but that he was eight years old at the time, the questioner remarked "Children are very impressionable."

"Points" are given as a measure of a person's loyalty. If he buys the *Daily Worker* from a news-stand that rates so many points; if he subscribes to it, the rating is a bit higher. If he joined a Left-wing bookshop or gave money to the Spanish Loyalists or petitioned for the pardon of Earl Browder, or, as a college student, belonged to the American Student Union, each fact is weighted. One safeguard we have against such a purge in this country is that not many members of the British Government would survive such a questionnaire. A number of them are quite well-read.

CRITIC

CROWN REPUBLICAN

Dominion potentates hold Commonwealth debates
And hover on the brink of a decision—
Extending invitations
To the Commonwealth of Nations
Demands a constitutional revision.

Free India being loath to take the homage oath
To Britain's Crown, the Empire's link material,
Concessions are essential
To the concept Presidential,
Within, and yet without, the Crown Imperial.

The Commonwealth would sink without the regal link,
The symbol of its sovereign democracy,
But in the fixed opinion
Of the Asian Dominion
The Crown remains an emblem of autocracy.

Though grouped around the Throne,
Dominions have outgrown
The supervision of the Crown Colonial,
But the Empire's Constitution
Can offer no solution
Dispensing with allegiance ceremonial.

They realise with a shock the Crown's
the stumbling-block,
The Crown's the heart and essence of the matter;
So with statesmen undecided,
The case might be confided,
With hopeful expectation, to a hatter.

An expert could devise some happy compromise,
Not prejudicial to the Crown domestic,
A headgear emblematic
Of the concept democratic,
A "tile" egalitarian yet majestic.

The Crown Republican would meet the Nehru plan,
To which allegiance would not be improper,
For India, anti-royal,
Could to that Crown be loyal,
Broad-based upon a Presidential topper.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on a POSTCARD and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

It makes me highly indignant to see so many heathen, agnostics, sceptics and atheists taking advantage of a Christian holiday.

The practice of having a few days off work at Easter-time should be stopped until people remember that it is a Christian festival.—Letter in *Daily Record*. (E. Gaines.)

WIFE SUFFOCATED AFTER PARTY. UNUSUAL, SAYS CORONER.—Headlines in *News of the World*. (P. L. Heyworth.)

I met Mr. Harry Streets, who is used to entertaining the Worthing public and is specially anxious to provide something for the children. He gave me a free demonstration of a French execution and other shows which can be turned on for a penny.—*Worthing Herald*. (Isabel S. Brewer.)

At both Services in the morning it is intended to preach a series of sermons on the "Deadly Sins," omitting lust.—*Our Church Review*. (Andrew Garly.)

TANGANYIKA TANGLE

THAT old King Charles' head of colonial policy—White settlement in East Africa—has once again been brought to the fore, this time by an international Mission sent by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations to examine Tanganyika at close quarters. The Mission was composed of a Frenchman, a Chinese, a Costa Rican and an Australian, and its dispatch to East Africa created a new historical precedent. The old Mandates Commission of the League of Nations had no power to send investigators into the field; but the Charter of the United Nations conferred this privilege on the Trusteeship Council. The 1948 visit to Tanganyika and the Belgian territory of Ruanda-Urundi was the first of what promises to be a whole series of first-hand investigations into the affairs of the Trust territories.

East African politics being what they are, any criticism of racial relationships there is bound to stir anger among the Europeans. The Mission's Report is one big implicit criticism—punctuated by explicit criticisms—of just this thorny racial situation. The inevitable protest meetings are already being held in Nairobi; the settler newspapers are bitterly resentful of the lack of "realism" in the Report; and European spokesmen are calling the United Nations "the most ineffective organisation ever set up." The Acting-Governor of Tanganyika is reported to have agreed with the description of the Mission's report as "disgraceful and monstrous."

What is all this excitement about? It can be put in a sentence: the Mission has opposed the extension of European settlement in Tanganyika. Its exact words are: "European colonisation should be curtailed and the strictest control exercised to keep it at the barest minimum consistent with the development of the territory and the present long-range needs and interests of the African inhabitants." There is no suggestion that the average settler is a bad man, that he maltreats his workers any worse than private employers elsewhere, or that he makes no contribution to the advancement of Tanganyika. But what the Uno Mission found was a situation (recognised for a long time by everyone who knows anything about East African affairs) in which a caste society based on race distinctions is being consolidated in the heart of Africa.

Tanganyika is an immense country, but two-thirds of its surface is arid and infertile. Of 6,344,000 acres under production, as much as 1,846,278 acres are owned by non-Natives, who comprise 11,000 Europeans and 60,000 Asiatics, whereas the Natives number over 6,000,000. This seems to work out, as the Filipino delegate has already commented at Lake Success, at 260 acres of land per head of non-Native population, and less than 1 acre per head of Native. Yet, in spite of African land-hunger, portions of the ex-German lands are now being allotted to Europeans for settlement schemes. Further, on a Legislative Council of 29 members, 15 members are officials; of the remaining 14, only four are Africans. It is true that until 1945 there were no Africans at all, so that the presence of four representatives is an advance. But these four are all Government nominees, and Africans expressed the opinion to the Mission that they are not representative of African opinion. The Mission found, moreover, that Provincial Councils are still in the category of "good intentions," and the creation of a Territorial Council, which might bring together African opinion from all parts of the country, had not been envisaged for "the foreseeable future." Nor is there any African representation worth speaking of on the special committees and boards of the Government. Needless to say, there are no Africans on the Executive Council, although the Mission thought there might well be. In general there seemed to be an extraordinary "lack of political planning beyond immediate steps, even in general terms."

When it came to look at the administration, the Mission found that all the senior posts were still in the hands of Europeans, though there had certainly been progress in the last ten years towards admitting Africans into some important positions. "But," said the Government, "there are practically no Africans with the right qualifications." "Very well then," replied the Mission, "let us see what opportunities exist for training them," and it turned to educational facilities. There it found a sorry state of backwardness. Of the 600,000 children in the four-year age-group which received primary education, only 115,000 were enrolled as pupils. Secondary school pupils numbered 2,031 (only 93 girls). As for higher education, 25 Tanganyika students were attending Makerere College in 1947, and 8 were in Britain for social welfare and vocational training. Even when the Ten-Year Development Plan is carried though by 1956, only 250,000 children will be receiving the primary four-year education, and only 200 students will be benefiting from higher education at Makerere.

Turning to economics, the Mission found practically all the commerce and industry in the hands of Europeans or Indians; it doubted whether Tanganyika was getting a fair share of the proceeds of its mines, and it shrewdly suspected that the progressive ideas on mining policy worked out by the Labour Government had not penetrated into local legislation. The Inter-Territorial arrangements between Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika for pooling certain common services appeared sensible on grounds of economic efficiency, but the Mission was informed on every side by Indians and Africans that they were acutely suspicious of any arrangements bringing Tanganyika into closer association with the Kenya settlers. The fact that the offices of the Inter-Territorial Organisation are situated in Nairobi seemed to be sufficient to damn it in non-European eyes. They could only see closer economic association as the thin end of the wedge towards the dreaded political union!

It was in the light of this whole situation that the Mission queried the place of European colonisation in Tanganyika. Not that there is anything new in this query; on more than one occasion since the Labour Government has been in office the Colonial Secretary has announced emphatically that Native needs must have priority, and that non-Native settlement shall be permitted only where it is quite clear that the land "is not required for Native occupation and is not likely to be required in the foreseeable future." But even while he expresses these sentiments, a continued trickle of immigrants enters the country and a European settler is found declaiming to the United Nations Mission: "Nothing, I repeat, nothing will stop Europeans from coming to a place like Tanganyika. When the Europeans become sufficiently powerful they will rule this country. That is the history of all colonies."

What is really lacking in Tanganyika is obvious—a clear and determined *policy*. London may cherish the fundamental ideas that the African should come first, that he should be encouraged towards self-government, that his standard of living should be raised. But once these principles reach Tanganyika, they collide with the powerful claims of the minorities and special interests on the spot. In a hundred insidious ways Colonial Office policy is watered down by local pressures; and who is there, other than the harried official, to combat the subtle influence on his doorstep of employers, companies, planters and settlers? The Africans are unorganised, uneducated, politically untrained; the Indians are caught precariously between the upper European and lower African millstones, and aware of their own unpopularity. The whole psychology of Tanganyika politics is wrong, and no amount of White self-righteousness or Native resentment can set it right. Only an absolutely unequivocal policy can break through the confusion. British spokesmen may retort to critics at Lake Success that the Mission was by no means unappreciative of British administration, and that Britain has, in fact, done almost everything she could in a backward difficult country with an uneducated population—everything, that is, except have an unambiguous policy. Ironically enough, it is just this which the irate Europeans of East Africa are now demanding. We want, proclaimed a settlers' meeting in Tanganyika a few weeks back, a "categorical statement from the Government which will leave nobody, Black or White, in any doubt as to whether the Tanganyika Government wants settlers or only stop-gap planters." Precisely.

RITA HINDEN

SO THEY SAY . . .

Those High-speed Presses

Daily Mail, April 19:—

CRASHED AT 80 M.P.H. AS WIFE LISTENED

News Chronicle, April 19:—

. . . battling towards the corner at over 90 m.p.h. . .

Daily Telegraph, April 19:—

. . . crashed . . . while approaching a corner . . . at about 100 m.p.h.

Daily Express, April 19:—

. . . both were travelling at 120 m.p.h. plus . . .

Better Late than Never

Daily Worker, January 20, 1948:—

Heinz Guderian, Hitler's first tank Marshal and personal darling, has started on a new job assigned to him by the United States authorities . . .

Daily Graphic, April 18, 1949:—

INSIDE INFORMATION.

General Heinz Guderian, senior untried Nazi general and Hitler's last chief of staff, has been given an important job by the American intelligence service in Germany . . .

Facing Both Ways Again ?

Sunday Express, April 24:—

Harry Pollitt, secretary of the Communist Party, was hit under the eye by an egg thrown at him last night at Dartington, Devon.

Reynold's News, April 24:—

. . . someone threw an egg which landed on his back.

Department of Tactful Omission

Star, April 20:—

Because a Conservative Government might be elected a railway engine driver opposed his daughter's request to marry at Reading to-day . . . the girl said her father would not give his consent until he knew what Government got into power. "He said if the Conservatives got in there would be thousands of unemployed and Ronald might be one of them."

How many papers reported this little story? Only the *Star*, *Daily Mirror*, *News Chronicle*—and the *Evening News*, a Conservative paper which still knows a good story when it sees one.

News Chronicle, April 19:—

With a smile as bright as her "good service" ribbons, Mme. Parsenova from Moscow brought to 2,000 British teachers at Margate yesterday a good-will message from their Russian opposite numbers.

Which papers omitted to report this now all-too-rare sentiment? Only the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail*, and the *Daily Mirror*.

Daily Mail, April 25:—

RUSSIANS PAY HOMAGE AT SHAKESPEARE TOWN.

Stratford may once again claim friendly relations with the Soviet Union after the week-end celebrations in honour of Shakespeare's 385th birthday. Last year there was no Russian representative to hoist the Hammer and Sickle in the traditional ceremony of the flags. Yesterday there were three, including Mme. Zaroubin, wife of the Ambassador.

In the interests of "cultural relations," how many other papers reported this? Only the *News Chronicle*.

AUTOLYCUS

BUTTERFLY WINGS

"WHY on earth does Hoppy waste his time on butterflies ? " I have heard eminent scientists say pityingly of their doyen. The inference was that Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, who, as the greatest biochemist of his time, had earned the O.M., the Nobel Prize and the Presidency of the Royal Society and of the British Association, was in his second childhood. And so, in a way, he was. At the age of 81, he was still "playing around" with butterflies, just as he had done as a lonely, friendless little boy at Enfield and as a wayward City clerk, who, at the age of 17, managed to get his first scientific paper printed in the *Entomologist*. Just as he had done, too, in his forties, when he applied his chemical research experience to the pigments of butterfly wings. All his life, until the day he died, butterflies fascinated him, not as a collector, but as a chemist.

Only now, after his death, are scientists beginning to understand why "Hoppy wasted his time on butterflies" and to respect his uncanny prescience as a chemist. It is part of the fascination of science that a scientist can chase a will o' the wisp, and discover it is CH_4; or a butterfly, and find it is a clue (note, "clue" not "cure") to cancer and one of the inmost secrets of the living process.

Today, the "pterins" (from the Greek for wing") are among the most important factors in biochemistry. They are a chemical group identified with the pigments of butterfly wings. One of them, pteroyltriglutamic acid, has been synthesised as "teropterin" or artificial folic acid, and has been effectively used as a treatment for one form of pernicious anaemia. Folic acid is necessary for the growth of all cells, including the malignant growths of cancer.

The cause of cancer, the most awesome of the killer diseases, has so far eluded the hosts of workers and the millions spent on this, the most important branch, of all humanitarian research. Cancer takes many forms, and, it is generally held, may be due to different causes, although Prof. W. E. Gye, Director of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, from a life-time of investigation, has recently come down flatly for a virus as the cause. If he is right, as the *British Medical Journal* observed, "It means that, of the current theories of the nature of cancer, some 90 per cent can be quietly relegated to the wastepaper basket, leaving investigators free to concentrate on a much more limited field through which certain obvious paths are clearly indicated."

What has held up the acceptance of the virus theory (first suggested by the discovery by Rous of the Rockfeller Institute in 1910 that tumours could be transmitted to fowls by injections of cell-free extracts) has been the fact that cancer can be produced in different ways. Chimney-sweep cancer has long been known to be caused by soot acting on the skin. People who handle croton oil and tar can get a similar form, and the chemical common to these hydrocarbon-cancers has been isolated and can produce cancer on the skin of animals. It is nearly related chemically to oestrogen, the female sex hormone, and to Vitamin D. X-rays, which can be used to treat cancer, can also be used to cause it by upsetting the natural characteristics of the cell. And gamma rays, given off by atomic fission, can cause leukemia, or "cancer of the blood." Does the virus supervene in these chemical and physical processes ? Is it produced in the cells or does it come from outside ?

Even if the virus is the "tumour inciter" there are still a lot of questions to be answered before the cancer process is fully understood. As the great Paul Ehrlich said, "I have wasted 15 years of my life on cancer research. Until some fundamental discovery is made revealing the nature of life itself not a step forward will be made in our knowledge of cancer."

Cancer-cells are not, as cells, unhealthy. They are particularly virile and healthy—like Nazi Storm Troopers. They grow and multiply at the expense of the organs of their origin. They break away and escape through the glands to other parts of the body, which they colonise and destroy—the treacherous deadly "seeds" or "secondaries" which escape radium-treatment, or the surgeon's knife, and which (it is hoped) the new radioactive isotopes will reach. These are ordinary chemicals "cooked" in the atomic pile so that they give off rays, like radium. Since, however, they behave like ordinary chemicals, they join in the natural processes of the body. For instance, radioactive iodine will be absorbed by thyroid tissue; and, if the thyroid gland is cancerous, it may destroy the cancer. More than that, if cancerous thyroid cells have escaped and are ranging through the body, radioactive iodine will seek them out wherever they are and attack them too. But this kind of cancer-treatment is still in its infancy.

The word is still with Ehrlich: we still need "a fundamental discovery revealing the nature of life itself," since cancer is an aberration of living cells. That is why the work on pterins—"Hoppy's butterfly wings"—is exciting scientists. Nucleic acid, the innermost chemistry of the cells, includes a pterin-group, so that the butterfly chase which a small-boy started among the hedgerows of Enfield has led into the ultimate repository—the living nucleus—with possibilities as great as those which lay in the nucleus of the atom.

Short of that, however, there are already significant developments in the investigation of the pterins in relation to cancer. Folic acid, as has been mentioned, is a factor in the growth of cells. It has been discovered that there are "antagonists" to folic acid—related chemicals which curb its action. If, therefore, antagonists could be found which would offset the folic acid action in cancerous cells without affecting normal cells, a big step forward would have been made. One such, according to Sir Robert Robinson, President of the Royal Society, is "A-methopterin," which has restrained malignant growth in cell-cultures and cancer in laboratory animals. Another approach to the problem has been advanced by Dr. A. Haddow and his colleagues at the Chester Beatty Research Institute. They were using a certain chemical on albino rats and found that it produced yellow pigmentation of the hair. They then tried other pigments including xanthopterin, one of the butterfly colours, and found that it did not change the coat but produced abnormal growth in the rats' kidneys. They then tried different chemicals suspected of producing cancer and found that those most closely related to xanthopterin had the same effect.

It is an interesting speculation whether particular pterins have particular affinities for the organs of the body (concentrations of folic acid exist in the liver and apparently xanthopterin has a predeliction for the kidney) and whether their antagonists (their combative cousins) have the same affinities so that they might checkmate on the site. There is, however, and must be, no suggestion in all this that the pterins offer a short-cut to a universal cure for cancer. At the moment they are just interesting clues to the process of malignant growth.

Another interesting fact about pterins is that they form a base of the Vitamin B complex. This led me into a remarkable discussion with Dr. Lepine, the virus expert of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, who pointed out a significant feature of poliomyelitis (misnamed "infantile paralysis" since it is by no means confined to infants and does not always paralyse). He pointed out that in polio cases there is an excess of pterin in the spinal fluid. Poliomylelitis is peculiarly a disease of advanced and prosperous civilisations. It is rampant in America and is barely known in backward countries. That means it attacks those with the highest standards of living and, by other tokens, the most healthy. It is, moreover, epidemic in the summer months. His conclusion was that a contributory cause was an excess of vitamins, which enabled the virus, which is the primary cause, to grow and multiply. On that analysis, the disease is commonest in the summer months because the protective vitamin foods are abundant in natural form and do not need to be supplemented either by selective "vitamin menus" or by special preparations so common in the U.S.A. His advice was "lay off any excess of Vitamin B during the summer."

All of which goes to show that scientists like Gowland Hopkins should be encouraged to chase butterflies or any other fancy because no one can say where they will be led in the pursuit.

RITCHIE CALDER

GASWORK SOCIALISM

(By a Correspondent)

THE streets of our cities will still be cold, grey and deserted this Sunday, when thousands of gas workers go on the early shift to make their first cubic feet of nationalised gas. Unobtrusively, an industry of some one thousand undertakings, supplying eleven and a half million consumers with gas and producing millions of tons of coke, tar and chemical by-products, will have slipped into public ownership. The trio of nationalised power industries will then be complete; there seems to be little possibility of enlarging the trio to a quartet by including oil.

The administration of the gas industry is to be decentralised and placed broadly in the hands of twelve semi-autonomous Area Boards. The heads of these Boards meeting together will themselves constitute the central Gas Council under an independent Chairman or Deputy. The other two industries of the trio are more centralised. No representative of the Divisional Coal Boards sit on the N.C.B., while only about one-third of the electricity Area Boards are represented on the Central Authority. But, centralised or decentralised, the quasi-independent public corporation in gas, as in coal and electricity, has still to solve large personnel problems. Will the new structure in the gas industry, for instance, provide sufficient opportunity for the 130,000 gas employees to share in their industry's management? For a prime aim of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, representing most of the industry's 105,000 manual workers, is to get the functions of the present Joint Industrial Council extended, particularly at works level. Its members want joint works committees on which they will have a real say, not only on wages and welfare, but also on problems of management. Wisely, the Union is against separating consultative from negotiating machinery. It feels that the works committees will be able to tackle problems of production far more realistically and effectively, and with more active support from the mass of employees, if they are not debarred from considering wages and conditions as well.

These works committees will be largely a new departure. For, despite the industry's much vaunted labour co-partnership schemes, there has been little opportunity in the past for workers to share in management. While the degree of workers' participation has, of course, varied from undertaking to undertaking, in general these schemes have been little more than bonus systems. According to the figures given by the British Gas Council, they cover 54,000 employees (about 40 per cent. of the total employed in the industry). To these employees £500,000 has been paid annually in bonuses—representing, for each member, barely £10 a year.

To the employers the co-partnership schemes had their attractions. Each co-partner had to sign an individual contract with his employer, making it difficult for the Union to organise the men and to apply the benefits of collective bargaining. It is therefore not surprising that the Union is bitterly opposed to co-partnership schemes, and that one of its major campaigns under nationalisation will be to press for their complete abolition and the disbursement to their members of all assets held.

The Union's view is that under nationalisation increased efficiency in the industry should reflect itself in improved wages and conditions for all gas workers rather than just for those who happen to be in areas (particularly around London) where co-partnership schemes operated. Quite apart from any bonus, gas workers employed in the large works of the metropolitan area receive higher wages than those prevailing in the rest of the country. Generally speaking throughout the industry, the larger the works and the more densely populated the area it supplies, the higher the wages. While the Union intends to retain a higher rate for London, it wants to bring all provincial rates up to those prevailing in the larger provincial centres like Birmingham. This means that an unskilled day labourer would in future get £5 for a 44-hour week in the provinces irrespective of the geographical location or size of the undertaking for which he works. The London rate for the same job would still be 8s. a week higher. The Union realises that the levelling-up of wages in the provinces will drive some of the ridiculously small, almost "one-man," rural gas works out of production. This would probably happen in any case as part of the process of rationalisation under State ownership.

The establishment of new rates of pay for the unskilled labourer will mean an entirely new wages structure, as the higher pay of the stokers and fitters is based on the minimum rate earned by the unskilled labourer. Most of the stokers and other skilled workers engaged in the primary stages of gas production are on shift work. For the making of gas is a round-the-clock process, with retorts being charged, coal baked, gas drawn off and coke discharged throughout the 24 hours in an unbroken cycle; ovens are kept burning seven days a week for years on end. The hours of the shift worker (one-fifth of the industry's manual labour force) reflect this. Up to as recently as 1946 he worked seven days a week. Now he performs six eight-hour shifts weekly, either from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., or night shift from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. For this 48-hour week his rate is £7 15s. in London and £7 in the provinces.

In addition to long hours, the conditions in which he works are unpleasant. The atmosphere in the retort houses, particularly in the most common old-fashioned "horizontal" type, is hot and sulphurous. Everything is begrimed with soot, coal dust and caked tar. On the "intermittent vertical" retorts the men have to wear thick clogs and goggles as they "rod out" white-hot chambers and deal with incandescent coke as it is pushed out by mechanical rams. Work is easier on the modern "continuous vertical" retorts, where a high degree of mechanisation in charging has been introduced, and where the coke is pre-cooled before ejection. In addition to being pleasanter to work, this type of retort is far more economical in its use of manpower, requiring only one-third as many workers as the older types.

While the Union has the introduction of a five-day week for shift workers as a long-term aim, it does not intend to press for it immediately after nationalisation. It maintains that the industry is under-manned, and that the intake of new labour is insufficient to keep the retorts going and at the same time give shift workers two days off a week. The probable connection between insufficient recruitment and a six-day week seems to have escaped attention. Another factor which may effect recruitment, and on which gas workers feel strongly, is the question of promotion. They expect nationalisation to give better chances of technical education and promotion to men in the manual grades. In the past, they claim, technical and administrative staff has been generally recruited from outside.

Finally, there are the consumers cooking their Sunday joint. What can they expect? The present trend of gas prices (they have doubled since before the war) makes cheaper gas in the immediate future unlikely. But now that all the power industries belong to them, the consumers have the right to expect that the long-term planning of coal, gas and electricity will be integrated. Under the Act, Area Gas Boards and Divisional Coal Boards are already bound to co-ordinate their carbonisation activities. A policy should be concerted which will also make the best use of gas produced by the coke ovens of other industries, notably iron and steel. The State-owned industries should be strongly discouraged from taking narrow departmental views and making paper profits out of one another. In the same way no middleman should be allowed to interpose his profit in transactions between one corporation and another. It is on its ability to fit the gas industry into a comprehensive power pattern for Britain that the latest instalment of nationalisation will finally be judged.

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Wight.

NOW that the sun climbs higher and we have already had the first big holiday rush, the ferries to this island will bring more and more visitors. As a solid body I may occasionally curse them, but as a fellow spirit I understand and sympathise with them. They come here in search of magic, which appears to glitter invitingly at the end of the tiny sea voyage here. Magic is what most of us want—and I fancy that when we stop wanting it we are beginning to die—and I wish the economists who rule our lives now would remember this. When people find this ancient and deeply laid desire being completely frustrated, then, I suspect, either they begin to lose interest and their energy mysteriously dwindles (economists please note) or they store up a resentment that finally bursts out into violent action. In the last resort they would rather have an evil magician, like Hitler, than no magic at all. Large industrial communities without religion or even the excitement of new social ideas seem to me dangerously short of magical equipment; and the thin wires of sport and gambling, films and radio, carry a menacing heavy load. Look how the popular press in these communities hurriedly and eagerly welcomes any new extra bit of wiring: "It's all right. Here's Television! Summer's coming! Here are three more pretty girls in bathing dresses! Steady, boys, steady!"

You remember what I wrote to you, a few weeks ago, about Russian writers? Well, the other day I picked up the reminiscences of one Teleshov, who was very active in the various writers' "circles" of the 'Nineties and later, and finally became the curator of the Moscow Art Theatre Museum. Now here in these reminiscences of the pre-Revolution era you have Russian writers behaving as they do now. They meet regularly to explain and read aloud their new work. There is much frank and even violent mutual criticism. There is the same emphasis on social purpose. All this without a Politbureau in sight and with the censorship and secret police of the Czar. Thus, much of what we attribute to Communism belonged in fact to Russian character and life before the Revolution. This misunderstanding, of course, cuts both ways. The Russians on their side cannot understand that Western writers do not behave in this fashion because it has no appeal to them. They imagine that if we do not meet in large circles to discuss our work, to applaud and condemn each other, it is because sinister influences have us at their mercy. Moreover, such is the world to-day, few people on either side would recognise that my motive in making these observations is to pierce the blanket of cross-purposes and to discover beneath it the naked truth. They would read into these remarks a *political purpose*. One lot would say: "He's coming round to our side again." And the others: "A-ha! The old fellow-traveller at work again!" Which means that the truth, still to be found somewhere on this torn earth, is buried deeper again.

Last week my old friend Robert Lynd arrived at his seventieth birthday. When I first came to London and he was literary editor of the *Daily News*, I must have reviewed hundreds of books for him. But this was merely the beginning of my debt. He was—and still is—an enchanting human being. (He and Walter de la Mare, I think, shine brightest in the memory's long gallery of men of letters.) My one complaint against him is that he allowed the reviewer and occasional essayist in him to take precedence over the critic. In the early 'Twenties he was producing volumes of criticism, largely made up of collected articles, and instead of stopping altogether I think he ought to have gone forward, challenging the new Solemn-High-Priest school of criticism that came into fashion then, and given us larger works, of which he was fully capable. I have one of these volumes, *Books and Authors*, in front of me. The plums are thick. Of Arnold Bennett: "He has a taking way of giving information as if it were inside information. He is the man of genius as tipster." Of Wells: "It seems almost as if he loved the destiny of man more than he loves man himself." Again: "Lord Rosebery's oratory is the port at a banquet. It is a little somnolent in its charm." Of Max Beerbohm: "He has all the virtues of egotism without any of its vices." Again: "But, if Mr. Norman Douglas likes you, the danger is that he will throw you at somebody else's head." Of T. S. Eliot's criticism: "His essays in praise have scarcely more of that vitality which is a prerequisite of good criticism than his essays in blame. He obviously admires Blake and Ben Jonson, but he leaves them as rigid and as cold as though he were measuring them for their coffins." These random quotations suggest the constant sparkle but not, perhaps, the central glow of liberal good sense and feeling, the conviction, implicit throughout his criticism, that good literature and good life have a common root. He wrote criticism like a man of the world to whom reading is a pleasure, and not like some dyspeptic don wearily grinding his way through set books. (You would never gather from much recent criticism that reading itself is not, after all, a compulsory activity.) And in his "Y.Y." essays and *News Chronicle* articles he has taken fun and wisdom and a glint of poetry into the common world of streets and pubs, barbers' shops and race meetings, as if Fleet Street had its own wandering friar. If I were a Labour Prime Minister, announcing a liberal programme, this is the kind of man to whom I would give a high honour, and if the Treasury æsthetes didn't like it, they could lump it. Although always a fervent Irish Nationalist, Robert Lynd, a Belfast man, never had the impudence and hard core of ambition that so many of the Irish bring into letters, otherwise he would have got himself talked about more and reached a wider reputation. But he would not have been himself, nor rightly claimed so much of our affection.

There was a time in my teens when my ambition was to be a comedian (the face was there), and ever since I have looked upon the drolls with a fraternal eye. An old favourite of mine among them, Will Hay, died last week. Did I ever take you to see him? His seedy, irritable schoolmaster, swaying on a tightrope above an abyss of ignorance, was a Dickensian piece of characterisation. But the secret of his hold upon all audiences was his superb timing, upon which much of the art of comedy rests. (Recordings of his act should be kept in the rehearsal room of the National Theatre.) Ironically enough, although he had to pretend every night to know less about anything than the audiences he played to, he was a serious, mathematically minded fellow with a considerable reputation as an amateur astronomer, and, as I know from meeting him on several occasions, a well-informed and pungent talker. And a mathematical exactness came into his clowning. He was a master of what the film people call "the double take," that is, an absent-minded acceptance of something outrageous followed—and it was here that the timing was so important—by a sudden glaring recognition of the outrage. He could play as unerringly on his features and voice as Heifetz can on his fiddle. And the death of such triumphant drolls, who have enriched so many idle evenings, seems to me more melancholy and darkening than the passing of far greater men. They leave behind no masterpieces and monuments; but one moment are still smiling, chuckling, bowing, and the next moment have vanished into the grave.

This reminds me that last week-end I was talking to some intelligent youngsters here about life before 1914. I was telling them what grand entertainment, especially in the clowning department, I used to have in those days, generally for fourpence (in the Balcony, behind which was a tuppenny Gallery) at the Empire in Bradford. They were polite about it, but clearly they did not believe me when I declared with much emphasis that it was superior to anything of the kind offered now for very much larger sums of money. (Yet Chaplin came out of that world, and they could appreciate him. And I once spent hours with him remembering the songs and antics of the old Halls.) No, they felt that the old boy was merely being sentimental about his youth; and no doubt I was to some extent, but, nevertheless, I have a very good memory and some thoroughly sound, forty-year-old standard in this matter of clowning, and I know that I was right. But, of course, there was no way of settling the argument. Yet when I took a schoolboy to a film show, not long ago, and he saw there the re-issue of an old slapstick film, originally made more than thirty years ago, he stared and rocked in an ecstasy, insisted upon staying on to see this film again, and went back next day for another dose of it. What shattered him was this unexpected discovery of an uproariously comic *world*, which was what the early slapstick films borrowed from the Karno music-hall sketches; a world in which farmers, grocers, policemen, and even the very cows in the fields are all montrously daft, and trains and cars turn into comic characters; the vision of Rabelais caught in celluloid. We could all do with a generous helping of it. I offer my assistance here and now for a grand political slapstick film, with custard pies and bags of flour overwhelming a conference.

J. was called out from dinner the other night by a telephone message from the police. While she was out, the rest of us tried to guess what the trouble was, but the truth was far stranger than our wildest guesses. A boy who had been lowered down a cliff near here had lost his grip on the rope, had fallen and been killed. The question the police put to J. was: Could a shag have attacked the boy so fiercely that it made him lose his hold on the rope? Which must be one of the oddest queries that ever found its way out of a police station.

J. B. Priestley

The Arts and Entertainment

SPECTACLE AT STRATFORD

With *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* The Stratford Festival pays a magnificently glowing tribute to the Romantic Imagination. Never in two successive nights has my eye been so continuously ravished. And for my part I must confess that this assault upon the senses was so intense and so successful that I surrendered to it completely and allowed the critical spirit to be dulled—at least so long as the curtain was up. Designers, producers and actors combined to catch and hold from these plays every lightest romantic breath that blows across them from the springtime of the world when belief was innocent and love credulous and the attitude all.

It needed an effort to remember afterwards that Mr. John Gielgud's rich production of *Much Ado*, brilliantly and beautifully coloured by M. Mariano Andreu, is really too smooth. But that is the price we pay for the elegant pattern Mr. Gielgud has imposed on a production which moves successively into the most taking of groups and figures. M. Andreu, the designer, mixes his Italianate styles—perhaps too much in the end, but he produces some entrancing dresses, and his middle scene is particularly ingenious, a portico of straight pillars which slides away to make a most noble church for that ignoble scene where Claudio hands back his bride to her father in full company with:

"Give not this rotten orange to your friend."

It needs the full flight of the Romantic Imagination to sweep us above the blots in this play, and Mr. Gielgud and his designer achieve this by lulling us with style.

The Dream has every advantage as a play. Here the Romantic Imagination is given a full, free run. And what a run it gets here! Mr. Michael Benthall produces with his characteristic lightness and pace, and he has chosen as his designer an artist (Mr. James Bailey), young enough not to have been dimmed by the inter-war heresy the plainness is the essence of style or that profusion is "Victorian" and "bad." He is gifted with a rich poetic sense, and he combines this with a striking sense of theatre. The enchantment that results has to be seen to be believed. Veronese has been ransacked for the Athenian dresses and the Ducal palace, studded with evocative detail and flashing and diminishing in a long perspective of golden Corinthian pillars. His wood, starred with flowers and trailing convolvulus, is magic; and the magic even moves when the wood transforms itself to a glade with a great gnarled stump sliding into it. Mr. Benthall's lighting of these enchanting scenes would deserve a paragraph to itself.

But why, when the eye is so richly feasted, should the ear be so woefully starved. How few of these actors begin to speak verse as it should be spoken. This is not merely a question of audibility (in this respect it is all much better than last year). It is a question of *relish*. The actors in *The Dream* have put into their mouths the most rich and delectable of sounds that could, simply by themselves, on a bare stage, evoke a beauty that not even Mr. Bailey could match. Why weren't they able to enjoy it for its own marvellous sake? Miss Kathleen Michael as Titania, for instance (to which in other respects she well adapted herself), spoke her lovely lines with a monotonous lugubrious fall. Mr. William Squire, a sinister Oberon, spoke clearly but dully. And Mr. Philip Guard would have been a quite brilliant goatish Puck, instead of just a very striking one, if he hadn't tried to produce the impression of haste by panting through his words. Somehow Mr. Benthall must find a compromise which allows him the pace and vivacity that he so brilliantly contrives without destroying, for the sake of it, the poetry itself.

There were several exceptions: Mr. Harry Andrews for one, who adds to a fine voice splendid romantic acting as Don Pedro and Theseus, parts that may seem unrewarding to the actor but that give a ring to the whole tone if they're played full out as they were here. Mr. Clement McCallin also strikes the romantic attitude stylishly, an extremely spirited Lysander. Then there was Mr. George Rose's round, broad-bellied Dogberry, earthily and regionally spoken. In *The Dream* he was one of a very well-managed crew of mechanicals led by Mr. John Slater, a Bottom just good enough, and at moments more. The women (Miss Wynyard excepted) made on the whole a less positive impression. But no one lets down the level. Indeed, the company as a whole strike one as a most workmanlike group who rise as a body to the pitch that is asked of them without anyone overtopping the rest. And isn't this indirectly a very high compliment to Miss Diana Wynyard, who could act the others right off the stage if she wanted to? She doesn't. But she remains the star of the company fitting in her finished gift where it is needed.

T. C. Worsley

RADIO NOTES

" . . . and around camp-fires, and loved it every time I heard it."

I met her in Venezuela
With a basket in her hair . . .

We heard this song in *Music Magazine* (that consistently good programme) last Sunday, and now I can't remember how it went on. But I copied out, while listening, its first two lines and the end of the sentence with which Miss Elizabeth Poston introduced it—her subject being " English Songs for Everybody "—because they were a moment of life, almost of poetry, in radio. Miss Poston got her feeling across with a sudden simplicity of voice and phrase which went straight home. So one wanted to hear about these songs, and the theme was, as I remember, that it was " up to everybody to have a go," whether by singing or listening or simply being interested, to keep good popular songs alive. When she promised us a " 20th Century masterpiece," called " The Keeper of the Eddystone Light." I was agog to hear this song, take down the words, and do my bit afterwards in keeping it alive. Alas! we were treated to one of those jolly-woolly fudges, absolutely inaudible, and in this case ruinous to Miss Poston's interesting effort. Sensitiveness and good manners, applied in taking trouble with such details, would not miss their mark. The listening ear will tolerate the slipshod or clumsy, but never the inconsiderate, the vulgar, the inadequate. A moment of felt life, of sincerity or integrity, falls like needed rain; nor is naivety to be feared. Understanding these things has been a big part of Mr. Pickles's secret. His unfaltering confidence has always had a streak of diffidence running through it. And I was sorry that he seemed to have a bad time with the Navy last week, aboard H.M.S. *Anson*. He seemed at first a little too respectful and awestruck at being there; there was a reference to best suits being worn. Listeners didn't want this respectfulness, and I'm sure the Navy didn't. Afterwards the fault was all the Navy's. They didn't warm up the platform by reacting to other people's answers, as the civilians do, their deadness kept short-circuiting it; one couldn't help feeling unhappy about the effects of discipline on free men. The thing was sticky and nervous. And if the place was " packed with officers, petty officers, and ratings," as Mr. Pickles said, why did no officer go up on the platform? *Have A Go* won't pass these more difficult tests (which one has always known it would have to face one day) unless its partakers co-operate up to the hilt, whoever they are.

I think Mr. Frank Swinnerton gave us the best moments of living radio last week in his ten-minute talks *Authors I Never Met* (an excellent idea). I missed the first, about Thomas Hardy, but the others (James, Saintsbury, Conrad, D. H. Lawrence) seemed quite extraordinarily good. Mr. Swinnerton has an attractive voice, on the air, and has found a way of being gentle and good-mannered without sacrificing anything of the sharpness of his points. His perspectives were good, he made every stroke tell (one was conscious of the great mass of reading behind) and built up pictures of his subjects which stick. He was particularly good in painting the effects on D. H. Lawrence of his home of " steamy possessive affections " and " Saturday night violences." The secret of these little talks was their Rooseveltian " fireside chat " quality, which made no attempt to bully or patronise. By contrast, the imposing banalities of Mr. MacNeice's *Queen of Air and Darkness*, with maddening pomp-and-circumstance music by Miss Elizabeth Lutyens, seemed to me a too strident, too *professional* form of " radio art." The uneasy oscillation between banal realism—" Mind if I smoke? " " Help yourself! "—and high-flying symbol (Man, Humanity, etc.) is not attractive. One would like something more humble and clumsy—in the spirit, say, of the close diffident arguing of *Paradise Regained* or *Samson Agonistes*. Human problems aren't amenable to this slangy headlining shorthand.

One word in praise of last Saturday's *Henry V*. It was ingenious and courageous to sandwich the musings in the French camp, on the night before Agincourt, between two bits of the " foul womb of night " prologue. And how one felt that night, with its silence, hushed voices (every word wonderfully distinct), and occasional travelling sounds! Mr. Richard Burton, as Henry, showed that he is going to be a very fine actor, in the hard-hitting school of Sir Laurence Olivier, yet distinctive in voice and style. Producer (Mr. Frank Hauser) and cast all deserve congratulation for their work with this vivid, horrible play.

Mark Ogilvie

THE MOVIES

" Passport to Pimlico," at the Gaumont and the Marble Arch Pavilion

" The Last Days of Dolwyn," at the Empire

" Act of Violence " and " Force of Evil," at the Ritz

Movie-goers have suffered so much from the humour in English films—our latest teeth-gritting encounter was with *Cardboard Cavalier*—that we are likely to welcome *Passport to Pimlico* with sobbing enthusiasm. At last, something English and light! This film from Ealing Studios, written by T. E. B. Clarke and directed by Henry Cornelius, takes advantage of the English character and blitzed London, local shopkeepers, barrow boys, crowds, the press, the police force, Whitehall, to break loose into an entirely native fantasy. A long-delayed bomb goes off in after-the-war Pimlico and uncovers treasures in a vault: they and the district surrounding them are found to belong, under old deeds, to the Duke of Burgundy. In little " Burgundy " English law doesn't apply; ration books are torn up, and bobbies join in drinking pints at the local after midnight; the black market rushes in, nylons hang from barrows, export cars are sold . . . this is the kind of lark that soon grows like a snowball. It's not long before the whole area is behind barbed wire, customs benches have been established at street ends, there is coming and going in Whitehall, and reprisals are undertaken by the " Burgundians " who hold up and search the passengers in tube trains entering their territory. In the end, besieged from all sides, but holding out on the food thrown by sympathisers from trains and buses, they conclude an advantageous peace with the Government. They have upheld the Englishmen's right " to be a Burgundian—if he chooses." The amazing heat-wave that has accompanied these events breaks on their open-air rejoicing with a thunderstorm and the thermometer rapidly falling towards zero. *Passport to Pimlico* is first-rate fun—no more—with a score of capable actors (Stanley Holloway, Hermione

Live, Old Hoss, and You'll get corn!

It was not to Mr. Strachey that we were looking to redeem the old promise, but to the Paper Controller, and he has at last done so—if not in full measure, at least by an increase in supplies sufficient for the moment.

For the past 9 years, paper restrictions have not allowed us to have The Political Quarterly freely on sale, nor to accept unlimited postal subscriptions. As a result, almost a generation has grown up to whom The Political Quarterly is only a name. Others, who have continually experienced difficulty in purchasing copies may be temporarily out of touch with the journal. The increase in paper supplies allows us to do our part in rectifying the position, and we cordially invite readers of *The New Statesman and Nation* to subscribe to The Political Quarterly. The cost is £1 per annum to any address in the world, and subscriptions may be sent to the publisher (see coupon below) or to newsagents or booksellers.

To those unfamiliar with The Political Quarterly (or to the more cautious!) we offer to send a specimen copy while the limited supply lasts. The following résumé of the origins of the journal is for their benefit:—

It was founded in 1929 by a progressive group of writers, economists and administrators, to provide a forum where vital political and social problems could be dealt with by experts at a length prohibitive in other journals. They ensured that The Political Quarterly would be free from any financial interest or political party and would thus be able to open its columns to contributors whatever their political affiliations. The direction is in the hands of the Editorial Board, listed below, and Mr. Leonard Woolf and Professor W. A. Robson are joint Editors.

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Baddeley, Radford and Wayne, etc.) to help it along. It doesn't need helping; that's the really encouraging thing. The makers of *Hue and Cry* have done even better the second time.

Another English film, *The Last Days of Dolwyn,* rather sadly disappoints. This introduces Mr. Emlyn Williams as director: he hasn't, on the evidence of this piece, that instinct for a new medium with which others from the theatre—notably Coward and Olivier—have sometimes surprised us. His touch is coarse and confident; he delights in the lush background which the camera will give his stage, in the opportunities for crashing melodrama, in the ease of cutting so as to emphasise plot and of beginning a scene and then quickly fading it out. He mixes serious intentions and crudely popular means. Still, he has had ideas. One was to show the destruction of a Welsh village in the industrial nineties to make way for a reservoir: this is realised with a convergence of sentimentality, shrewd character, and blow and thunder. Another was to present Dame Edith Evans in the part of a simple chapel caretaker who exerts herself passionately to defeat the scheme. There will be no two opinions about her performance. It is magnificent, as was indeed the very different figure cut for us a few weeks back in *The Queen of Spades.* When, and in what circumstances shall we see her again? Her presence almost carries the film to its weird climax; though it is a bad day for Dame Edith as well as for Dolwyn when alone she has to let loose the threatening waters and so obliterate the evidence that her son has killed a man—Mr. Williams himself, a bounding villian.

The two thrillers at the Ritz make an almost perfect programme for those who like one act of violence to be followed, after the news, by another. Both films are streamlined examples of what Hollywood has always been able to do better than anyone else, and the star in each case (Van Heflin and John Garfield) shows his appreciation by giving a first-rate performance.

William Whitebait

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SUTHERLAND AND WOOD

Twenty of the earlier paintings of Christopher Wood and twenty-six tiny water colours by Graham Sutherland make a visit to the Redfern Gallery well worth while. Sutherland is at his very best in these tiny pictures the size of postcards or book jackets. These miniature compositions are thoroughly comfortable: they are complete in themselves. Moreover they have a richness, even a sweetness, which one does not associate with full-scale Sutherlands. The flickering flame-like shrubs and the neat bunches of clawing, dark roots are not at all scrawny: they are compact—indeed they are as restfully composed, as sweet and as glowing as the budding roses in a Renoir still life. There is of course no mystery in the way a very little picture is so often much better than a larger version of itself. For even if two compositions could be identical in all but their scale, that difference would mean an essential difference in character. The reason is that every image, every complex in design has its natural scale. To enlarge with any success a design first conceived on the back of an envelope you have to make radical structural changes.

In my opinion enlarging by means of the familiar "squaring up" process is a bad business. It means subjecting a creative organism to a non-creative mechanical process which can almost be guaranteed to squeeze all the living breath out of it—if only because forms arrived at intuitively are de-natured by such a rational reconstruction as this process involves. One often notices, however, the very inaccurate and haphazard way in which painters have gone about this job. Surely Sickert and others have often been conscious of a certain decorative effect bestowed by the superimposed trellis of pencilled lines? Sutherland too, was once an addict of the grid system when turning little pictures into big ones and this may explain a common defect in his large paintings: they sometimes make the suggestion that they are in certain essentials unfinished. It is not that the canvas has received too little attention from the painter's brush: but the conception itself is sometimes a little thin.

Christopher Wood's pictures in this show are not, any of them, his best. Yet we find ourselves reflecting almost at once how remarkably good his second and even third best was. A picture like *From the Studio Window, Paris,* No. 13, would obviously have been better for a more *conscious* arrangement of the window frame (through which we see the roofs and chimneys) in relation to the canvas and to its size, top and bottom. But the truth is that the shutters and window bars present large, straight, flat shapes which could only have been adjusted satisfactorily to the edges of the picture by an artist whose sense of the architectural aspects of composition was more developed than Wood's. These shapes, which should have been strong and emphatic, are in fact weak and wobbly. Wood turns in haste to the view outside the window; fills the green city sky with cyclamen confetti, sunset-coloured: a passionate poetic invention, this rain of colour on to the roofs diverts our attention from the too tentative window-frame.

In the end he abandoned the sort of problem this window-frame posed: he ceased to bother with Cézannesque or Cubist notions of composition in which large areas of the design have a flat as well as a spatial connotation. He became less and less interested in the picture's surface as such: to achieve, in any manner, a vision of landscape, an evocation of place—this became his sole preoccupation. The result was, of course, that in fact his manner did crystallise; it became unique: and we were at last presented with the indigo seas, massively plastic, chunky, yet heaving; and with the little green hills, as round and soft as the back of a sofa, into which the a-symmetrical houses burrowed at all angles. A world is re-created in this manner and anyone visiting Cornwall may recognise Christopher Wood in the landscape which nurtured his vision.

Patrick Heron

Correspondence

PEACE AND WAR IN NEW YORK

Sir,—The recent "Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace," held in New York, was reviled and misrepresented in the American Press. The account of an eye-witness may interest your readers. The general tone of the meetings varied from what we in Britain would call "progressive" or "radical liberal" to "socialist." The atmosphere was certainly very different from that of Wroclaw, and from the recent Paris conference, at which I was present for a couple of days. Of course, many speakers affirmed that capitalism tends to war, and that the Atlantic Pact is directed against Russia. Apparently in America such statements automatically convict one of Communism. The Russian visitors, and particularly Fadeev, were more temperate than at Wroclaw. There was the same indictment of American capitalism, but no vituperation and no beating of Russia's big drum.

The chairman of the Conference, Dr. Harlow Shapley, a very eminent astronomer, head of the seven Harvard observatories, is noted for his liberal attitude and personal integrity. His character and his ability as chairman set the tone of the whole Conference. The issue to-day, he declared, was not between Communism and democracy but simply between peace and war. He is now facing persecution because of his alleged "Communism." It may be doubted whether his enemies will succeed in turning so eminent a man out of his job, but very many others who have spoken for peace have already been victimised.

The meetings were picketed, not by thousands, as the Press declared, but sometimes by hundreds. I understand from the Press itself that a leading part in this work was taken by the Roman Catholic War Veterans. The mental level of the pickets may be judged by their slogan (which I heard dismally chanted): "They call themselves intellectuals, but they have no brains."

According to the Press, there was no free discussion at the meetings. Actually, at the opening dinner an opponent was officially invited to speak. He expressed strong criticism, declaring that the Conference was being run by "a foreign Power." There was some hissing, but he himself subsequently thanked Dr. Shapley for giving him the opportunity to speak. He also stated that he had been received with courtesy.

At other meetings also there was criticism. The Conference divided into panels to deal with different subjects. Those which were concerned with science and letters (I am told) were occasions of sharp controversy. I myself took part only on the panel on religion and ethics. The audience seemed overwhelmingly Christian. The platform speakers were: a Roman Catholic, several Protestant clergy (including a bishop) and myself! I had come prepared to mediate in a fierce conflict between Christians and Marxists! Actually the clerics simply united in affirming that the churches must now make a courageous stand for peace, regardless of persecution.

The mass meeting at Madison Square Gardens, at which 18,000 were present, and from which thousands (I was told) were turned away through lack of space, gave one the illusion that the whole of America heartily supported the aims of the Conference. Next morning's papers, however, by speaking mainly of the pickets, gave a very different impression.

At the close of the Conference, the organisers were telling each other that they had really helped to create a turning point in history, so great had been the response to their efforts. A few days later they were anxiously steeling themselves to face bitter persecution. When I left the country I felt that in returning to our relatively sane society I was running away from a crucial battle; for my trip has convinced me that, though Russia has much to answer for, the main danger of war lies in the rising tide of "hysteria" in America. All honour to those who are risking so much in the effort to check it!

I had one encounter with an opponent of the Conference. A distinguished but seemingly psychopathic professor who has done his best to blacken the Conference, though he was not present at any of the meetings, charged me with omitting to criticise Russia because (I quote him) "those who paid you to come would not let you speak freely." I lost my temper. He apologised, twice. But he regards me as a dupe of the Communists. It is a distinction to be classed with Einstein, Shapley and many other leading American minds. The professor himself is the dupe of history. Along with Bertrand Russell and T. S. Eliot, great men though they be, he simple-mindedly identifies the present situation with that of the Munich period. History does not simply repeat itself. The Second World War had to be fought; the Third must not. OLAF STAPLEDON

West Kirby, Cheshire.

THE GREEK WAR

SIR,—The student of Greek affairs must continue to exercise care to avoid pitfalls, particularly the latest, sedulously fostered by the Greek Government suggestion that Marshal Tito's quarrels with the Cominform are inclining him to co-operation with the Athens Administration. It would be difficult to find a more absurd *ballon d'essai*. Tito has given not the least inclination that he has changed his view about the repressive Government of Greece, or that the vague promises of help from the West will modify his detestation. Is it a sign of despair on the part of the Greek Government's supporters that they give credence to the idea of Tito joining with them in a war against Albania? They must have been discouraged by Sir Reginald Leeper's unexpected recognition of the real issues of the Greek crisis. As British Ambassador in Athens in the formative years of the crisis, he has perhaps been regarded as belonging to the school of force. If so, his opinions have matured and now he appreciates that there are fear and mistrust throughout Greece. He discloses the view that, as you, Sir, have often insisted, the confirmed Communists are but a small minority of the guerrillas. To attract the non-Communists back to civil life from civil war he considers to be the prime pre-requisite of the restoration of peace and by implication he invites the Western Powers to intervene.

General Papagos is preparing quite a different argument. American sources estimate that in addition to the navy and a growing air force he will have under his command a regular army of 162,000 men. The National Guard is 50,000 strong. There are a *gendarmerie* of 26,000, a town police force of 7,400, a rural police force of 20,000 to 30,000, two kinds of rural militia comprising about 30,000 and 14 units of "municipal security guards," in addition to 20,000 trained war refugees.

At the end of last year the American taxpayers were supporting 280,000 arms-bearing Greeks. This mighty war machine has been created to crush guerrillas whose strength is not disclosed but who may have, say, 25,000 men and women in the field, only a small minority being Communists.

If this offensive succeeds, what will it have proved? That force is the final arbiter in establishing injustice and oppression? If so, it would be a sorry commentary on Western civilisation. The Easter parade in Greece of mass-slaughter elements discredits those who have formed and financed them. It should act as a stimulus to all who see the folly of it to make one more effort to get the Western Powers to try mediation. The non-Communist guerrillas cannot be attracted by the present Greek Government, which is mistrusted; but a resolute mediator with a provisional Administration to create the right atmosphere, could do wonders in Greece even at this late hour. The alternative is not only the loss of precious lives, but the deferment of the hope of reconciliation until the opportunity has gone for ever. E. H. ATHANASSOGLOU

15 New Street, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.2.

MALAYA

SIR,—I know how hard it is for British Communists and Communist sympathisers to believe anything derogatory to their Communist friends in any part of the world. Even if they know the facts they will pretend they do not and will hope to win the day by asking, with seeming innocence as Mr. Ross does, for the evidence. Mr. Ross, however cross he is at the exposure of the bogus claims of his friends in Malaya, should not assume that I am such a fool as to make statements without evidence. To give all the evidence on which I based the statements in my article would require four or five times the space taken up by the article.

(1) Mr. Ross says that the Communists could not have chosen voluntarily to have gone underground because that would have been illogical. If he had read my article with more care and less anger he would have seen that I, also, was surprised at the decision to go underground. The explanation is the Communist conference in Calcutta in February, 1948, attended by delegates from South-East Asia, at which instructions were given and plans co-ordinated for a general rising of Communists throughout South-East Asia during 1948. In April, the Communists began their armed rising against the Government in Burma. A month or so later they began in Malaya. In August they attacked the Republican Government of Indonesia, and so on. In each individual case the position of the Communists would have been stronger if they had not voluntarily departed from more or less peaceful activities to a deliberate campaign of murder. However, the object is quite clear—to create chaos and disorder in the hope that Communism will breed in the consequent distress.

(2) Mr. Ross claims that the Commissioner General in South-East Asia announced a decision to drive the Communist party underground in a series of melodramatic speeches. I have read all Mr. MacDonald's speeches on the subject of Communism in Malaya and, apart from the fact that they are not melodramatic, they announce no such decision. Mr. MacDonald did not make a speech on the subject until after the Communist murder campaign had begun.

(3) It seems unkind of Mr. Ross to suggest that his friends have not been asking for outright independence when all their pamphlets declare that their murder campaign is a struggle for national liberation. Perhaps their tactics changed after Mr. Ross left Singapore. Captured Communist documents, manifestos, distributed pamphlets, and interrogations of prisoners, show quite clearly, as I said in my article, that the Communist bandits in Malaya are striking violently for power. The plan was quickly to establish control of various regions which could be proclaimed as independent Communist areas, to extend those regions until they could be linked up in one Communist State, and to announce the Communist Republic of Malaya on August 3rd, 1948.

(4) Mr. Ross says that it is nonsense to say that the Communist bandits are not a national movement. I say that it is nonsense to claim that they are. There are less than 10,000 on the mainland and on the Island of Singapore out of a total population of nearly six million, 85 per cent. of them, as interrogations and a cross-section of captured prisoners show, have migrated to Malaya from China within the last twenty years—in other words, they are aliens to Malaya. There are less than one hundred Malays and Indians among the Communist bandits who are, with these few exceptions, all Chinese.

(5) I wrote, "A leaflet recently distributed by the Communists among the Chinese says: 'If you offend the British, you will be taken to a detention camp and fed well. You will not lose your property, although you may be deported to China. If you offend us, you will be killed. It is better to offend the British.'" Mr. Ross chooses to comment on this passage as follows: "The best story Mr. Wyatt found (and I can just imagine the jovial type who planted it on him) . . ." I repeat that the source of my information is a leaflet recently issued by the Communist bandits among the Chinese. It is true that I can't read Chinese, but perhaps I may be allowed on this occasion to believe what I am told by those who can.

(6) I do not claim that banishment is pleasant. What I do claim is that it is more humane to banish a few people from areas which have consistently supplied food and information to the Communist murderers, and withheld it from the police, than to allow a whole community to be terrorised. The only reason why most squatters do not give information to the police is an understandable fear of reprisals from the Communist murderers. The policy of

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deporting back to China some of these people has greatly increased the amount of information about the Communist bandits available to the authorities. I should add that the utmost care is taken to see that no financial loss is suffered as a result of the deportation, and no woman is sent back to China without her husband, or other male relatives if she is not married, unless she is willing.

(7) I did explain briefly, contrary to Mr. Ross' assertion, how the undemocratic and evil Communists of Singapore controlled the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions. Mr. Ross may have heard of the Chinese secret societies. The methods of control of the unions by the Communists from their headquarters were similar to those practised by the secret societies, and their methods are well known and much feared by the ordinary Chinese. The Report on Trade Unionism in Malaya by S. S. Awbery, M.P., and Mr. F. W. Dalley is illuminating on the whole subject of Communist control by terror of the trade union machinery.

(8) Mr. Ross says that because there have been no elections as yet on the peninsula, I cannot possibly know anything about mass Malay feeling (this, although he asserts that the Communist murderers enjoy massive prestige throughout the country). It was not necessary to wait for the 1937 elections in India to know that Congress was the most influential political party there. Nor is it necessary to wait for all-Malaya elections to know that the United Malays National Organisation is the most influential political party among the Malays in Malaya. Incidentally, the elections in Singapore (nearly all Chinese in population) have not thrown up any sympathisers with the Communist bandits.

(9) Mr. Ross finishes his letter with an absurd attempt to liken the Republican Government of Indonesia with the Chinese bandits in Malaya. Where did he take this wonderful analogy when the Communists attacked the Republican Government of Indonesia last autumn and had to be ruthlessly suppressed by the Republicans?

House of Commons. **Woodrow Wyatt**

[We hope next week to publish the second instalment of Mr. Wyatt's account of conditions in Malaya. The delay has been due to his illness since his return from Singapore.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

L.C.C. ELECTION

Sir,—The Labour Party are upholders of democratic government, which rests upon the popular vote. In the recent London County Council elections their representation on that body was reduced from a 3 to 1 majority to equality with the Conservatives, while they actually polled 118,000 fewer votes: an emphatic turnover. But they proceeded to nominate one of their defeated candidates as Chairman, and then by means of his double vote to appoint a sufficient number of Labour Aldermen to secure in future a small but workable majority on the L.C.C. itself and all the chairmanships of Committees. What does The New Statesman and Nation, always prompt in exposing anything which circumvents the will of the electorate, think of this? The Labour Party on the L.C.C. seem to have had an uneasy conscience about it, for they nominated only a sufficient number of new Aldermen to give them a majority of ten. But why if their democratic principles allowed them to do such a thing at all, why not have secured a majority of fifteen? Perhaps you can explain. To me it seems like saying "It is wrong to cheat, so I'll only pocket as much as I want—not a penny more."

The Lynskey Report should not have shaken confidence in the Labour Party, but this behaviour seems on the face of it on a different footing. I cannot see (though you may be able to point it out to me), the difference between wriggling out of the verdict of the L.C.C. electors and manipulating the ballot, a proceeding proper enough in a Fascist, but unpardonable in a Democratic party.

Desmond MacCarthy

[Critic, who commented on April 16 on Mr. Hayward's "maladroit behaviour," replies to Mr. MacCarthy in the London Diary.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

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CYCLE PATHS

Sir,—In your issue of April 23, Critic asks "Why is it, I wonder, that British cyclists, unlike those of Holland, Belgium and Denmark, won't use the special tracks laid for them along the arterial roads?" If Critic had ridden along these tracks himself I think he would not have needed to ask.

The tracks ars usually of concrete slabs, between fifteen and thirty feet long. The gaps between the slabs are either left open or filled with a mastic composition, which never settles at the same level as the concrete. After a time, the slabs settle in some places, lift in others and crack. And at every change of level the cyclist goes bump-bump as front and rear wheels cross it.

By comparison the road surfaces, even after years of partial neglect, are smooth, and while this remains the case cyclists will prefer the hazards of the roads to the constant double jarring of their spines on the cycle tracks.

Could it be that the tracks in Holland, Belgium and Denmark have surfaces which are suitable for cyclists? **Kathleen E. Watkins**

53 All Souls Avenue, N.W.10.

SOCIAL PRAGMATISM

Sir,—Your reviewer has not seen fit to withdraw his false statement that the thesis of my book is that "people's conduct *must* (sic) be socially pragmatic," but he has now at least been good enough to reveal the process of reasoning on which he based it, which it appears, went as follows: "In a chapter dealing with volition, non-reflex actions are defined in this book as 'psychologically determined actions.' Later the author argues in favour of something called social pragmatism,' which proves that she thinks it is *determined* that people's conduct shall be socially pragmatic."

A scarcely less Bedlamite logic, we now learn, led to the conclusion that social pragmatism is a form of ethic. The argument runs thus: "Ethical sentences are recommendations about conduct; the book in question contains some recommendations about conduct, therefore it is ethics"—which recalls the celebrated syllogism "All geese have two legs; you have two legs; therefore you are a goose." However, as regards the facts: Cookery books, bridge manuals, and signboards marked KEEP LEFT all carry recommendations about conduct, but they are not normally classified as "ethics." If my book is ethics it will take a rather better philosopher than your reviewer to prove it. **Lan Freed**

[This correspondence is now closed.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

HIS LITTLE AXE

Sir,—"It is a maxim, founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted further than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politican will venture to depart from it."

You may be as surprised as I was to discover who said this Machiavellian theme and, no doubt, followed it: that horrid smug little wart, who wanted kicking badly and who cut his papa's cherry tree down, with his little axe. Yes, Sir. It was George Washington himself when older. **O'Doneven**

Gold Mead, Lymington, Hampshire.

RICHARD SPENDER

Sir,—A Memoir of Richard Spender, whose *Collected Poems* we publish, is being prepared, and we should be grateful to hear from any of your readers who met or corresponded with him before his death in Tunisia in 1941.

Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.

44 Museum Street, London, W.C.1.

THOMAS BARKER

Sir,—I am collecting material for a book about Thomas Barker (Barker of Bath) 1767-1847.

If any of your readers can help me through the medium of letters, private papers, or documents connected with this artist and his time; or a description of any picture of his they may possess, I shall be duly grateful. **John E. Barker**

Windyridge, Booth Road,
Waterfoot, Lancashire.

Spring Books Supplement

RED FLAG WORDS

After years of editing there are a number of words that I can't come on without seeing, constantly above them, fluttering red flags, of the sort that announce not the Marxist's faith or the golfer's hope but danger from a minefield or at least from a steam-roller. The red flag words are those which are either commonly misused or mis-shaped or otherwise nasty. The word-lover needs to be on guard also against indiscriminate distaste for novelty. English is not a dead language; additions to it are desirable; our vocabulary cannot be too rich. Imports from abroad, if made in due form, should be welcomed; and history proves that slang also can devise acceptable bequests. But to impose a different or a looser sense upon a word already established is usually to blunt a tool: by doing this the lazy writer adds to the difficulties of conscientious craftsmen. Even the best writers, I must add, sometimes fall into traps. Imprecision in language is growing more and more common—partly, I suspect, because of the decline in classical studies, which—whatever their defects—do at least enforce, through "construes," an attention to the meanings of English terms. Here are some notes on words that always give me pause. References to *The Oxford English Dictionary* (O.E.D.), to Fowler's *Modern English Usage* (F.) and to Mr. Eric Partridge's *Usage and Abusage* (P.) reveal only a part of my indebtedness to these authorities.

Avocation means an occupation that is not one's principal business, Mr. Gladstone's Homeric studies, for instance. O. E. D. quotes Thomas Fuller: "Heaven is his vocation, and therefore he counts earthly employments avocations." The use of the word as the synonym instead of the antonym of *vocation* can be found as far back as the 17th century in Boyle (oh! these scientists!); it defaces the Despatches of Wellington, and even the Essays of Macaulay. The added syllable makes *avocation* sound more imposing to the ignorant, but the mistake deprives the writer of a useful distinction.

Instinctively.—Though F. offers a distinction between *instinct* and *intuition,* neither he nor P. comments upon the prevalently slipshod use of *instinctively* to denote mere absence of forethought or of conscious intention. The category of actions we perform instinctively is not large. There seems little likelihood that we inherit (though we may acquire from our parents) a distaste for Milton, rock-gardens, cricket or baroque architecture, though one finds writers declaring that they hate these instinctively.

Literally is used more often than not as what grammarians call an intensive—merely, that is to say, to add emphasis, like the word *positively.* The results are usually comical since its true meaning is the opposite to *figuratively.*

Mutual, as in *Our Mutual Friend,* where no reciprocity is possible, is called by F. a well-known trap. Many writers continue to fall into it. Friendship can be mutual, but not a friend.

Phenomenal means perceptible to the senses. In the sense of "extraordinary" or "prodigious" it seems to have been launched by Rossetti. Junius and the Duke of Wellington had already used *phenomenon* to mean a prodigy, and Dickens was probably drawing on current raree-show language when he talked of "the infant phenomenon." P. says that to divert *phenomenal* thus from its proper use to a job for which it is not needed is a sin against the English language. F. says that it should not be debased to equivalence with *unusual,* but may be used as a synonym for *prodigious.* He gives no reason for this strange indulgence.

Protagonist means the chief personage in a drama (from the Greek *protos*), and can properly be extended to denote the chief personage in a story or a factual event. F. says "To talk of *several protagonists,* or of a *chief protagonist,* is an absurdity as great, to anyone who knows Greek, as to call a man the *protagonist* of a cause or of a person." The notion that it means a champion attracts those who know the meaning of *pro* and *anti*; who do not know that *protagonist* comes from the Greek *protos* (meaning first); and who therefore fancy that a *protagonist* is the opposite of an *antagonist.* An analogous confusion intrudes a hyphen into *homosexual,* which comes from the Greek word *homos,* meaning *the same.* The error of deriving it from the Latin *homo* is doubly absurd, for this means "a human being," not "a man as distinct from a woman," which is *vir.*

Quietus means a discharge or acquittance given on payment of sums due, a receipt (*c.f.* German *Quittung*); also a discharge from office or duty. Hamlet's correct use of the word has been misunderstood, and its suggestion of the calm that comes with death led to its use in the sense of *coup de grâce* among sportsmen and careless writers. Thackeray went so far as to describe a nurse giving its accustomed quietus to a screaming infant, by which he meant not that she paid it or even killed it, but that she calmed it. There seems no excuse for the pretentious misuse of this word.

Sadism, a word derived from the pornographic daydreams of the Marquis de Sade, means cruelty that is used to excite sexual desire. It is now used to mean any cruelty that seems to be enjoyed by those who inflict it, and even any cruelty, however little pleasure it gives. This needless innovation seems due to the popularity of Freud rather than of the divine Marquis.

Singular is often misused, though neither F. nor P. takes account of this. It can be applied exactly only to what is unparalleled, and therefore it is inelegant to say "An eleven of singularly good cricketers"; though one can properly talk of "a singularly good eleven," if it has proved itself such. It is worse than inelegant to speak of a person being *very singular* or *most singular,* a habit popularised by Lytton Strachey, who liked using the word to denote oddity. This is almost as reckless as writing "very unique" or "most unique." In a long list of other such "uncomparable intransigents" given by P, are included *absolute, certain, complete, devoid, empty, essential, excellent, fatal, fundamental, harmless, ideal, invaluable, manifest, obvious, pellucid, perfect, pure* and *sufficient.* Most of these I should, I confess, be prepared to use in the comparative and superlative. In the list is *unique* but not *singular,* yet *more singular* seems to me offensive, while *more certain, purer* and *more harmless* are, however illogically, current usage.

Professor used as a title in front of a name looks like a horrid German neologism. Who was ever heard to talk of "Professor Pusey"? But the great Bentley did use the word in this way, and the usage seems to have been common in Scottish universities in the 18th century. It has for some while been spreading in England. I gather from a Cambridge Professor, who shares my distaste for it, that at Cambridge the style is smiled upon, at Oxford smiled at; and Gilbert Murray, I understand, has never allowed himself to be addressed as "Professor Murray."

Face up to.—English is suffering from a mysterious rash of otiose prepositions pimpling upon transitive verbs. This is a peculiarly nasty and common specimen. Can anyone maintain that "facing up to fearful odds" is stronger or in any way better than "facing fearful odds"?

Now for two words that it has become useless to attack, though the nice writer is unlikely to sully his pen with them. *Conscript* as a verb originated in the U.S.A., and the first reputable writer to use it was the genial, ill-educated Whitman. The correct form, to *conscribe,* has been good usage for over four hundred years. The misuse is now established beyond all hope of banishment, and one must hope only that it will not bring fellow ruffians with it. Or we shall read: "My finances are so circumscripted that I cannot subscript to the fund for inscripting a stone with the passage descripting the remedy prescripted for snake-bite."

Evacuate means to empty. A city or a building can be evacuated; a person only by a purge or an emetic or a Caesarean. The current use of the word to denote the removing of groups occurs as early as 1639, but so far as I know very seldom defiled the pen of a respectable writer before the penultimate war. This solecism is unlikely to disappear, since it describes an activity characteristic of our civilisation.

Next, some supposedly French words. *Chichi* is a slang expression that originally meant a piece of false hair. It has come to be used in France to denote undue formality, affectation or even effeminacy. In English it is commonly made an adjective denoting over-elaboration in style. The particular error I wish to denounce is the intrusion of a hyphen, *chi-chi.*

Bon viveur. The expression *un bon vivant* suggests a man addicted to the pleasures of the table rather than of the alcove. A *viveur* is a rake, and though one may hold that rakes can be good, the expression *bon viveur* is not French, and represents in English a pointless distortion of a useful Gallicism.

Exposé means an orderly setting out or *précis* of a body of facts or beliefs. It is a convenient importation, but I wish that the native form *exposal* had been adopted in its place. The common use of *exposé* to mean the unmasking of some scandal reveals ignorance of French, and quite gratuitously, since *exposure* carries just this sense.

Rapportage. The French took over the English word *reporter* a century or so ago. Later it became customary for *les reporters* to write *de grands reportages,* the word being applied, for instance, to descriptions of trials and of journeys by special correspondents. Between the wars this French offspring of an English word became popular among English journalists, who kept the foreign pronunciation of its final syllable, as in *garage.* Reporting took on a new dignity, it seems, from this *soupçon* of Paris. Recently a further and grotesque evolution has occurred here, the spelling *rapportage.* This French word denotes the activity of a retriever or of a school sneak—also of the secretary to a committee Its only merit, when used in English to describe a certain form of journalism, is that it is thought to look even more exotic and dignified than *reportage*. We need a word meaning "a piece of reporting"; and *reportage,* despite its origin, is a respectable formation from the verb *to report*. *Portage,* which has been good usage for five hundred years, provides a precedent. *Reportage* itself occurs in Webster's *White Devil* in the sense of *reputation*. I think that the word, little as I like it, must therefore be accepted, on condition that it be pronounced, and spelt, as an English word. *Rapportage* must be dismissed to an even lower limbo than *serviette* and *lingerie*.

Onto seems first to have been used as one word by Keats, and so illiterate did this seem to his editors that in 1876 they substituted for it *upon*. Following F., I think it odd to prefer *on to* to *on* or *to* or *upon*. He advises those who like the preposition to own up and write it in one word, *onto*. I disagree, preferring the hypocrisy that is a homage to virtue.

Only and *Even* are red-flag words only because they are sometimes misplaced by even the most punctilious of writers. F. is indulgent to the misplacing of *only* except where it may lead to ambiguity; less indulgent to the misplacing of *even*. P., usually not so rigorous as F., trounces the misplacing of *only* and does not mention *even*. "Aspasia even feared that Socrates was in love with her" (not only suspected but positively feared), "A. feared that even S. was in love with her" (not only half Athens but Socrates himself), "A. feared that S. was even in love with her" (not only liked but was in love with): each of these statements differs according to the placing of *even*. Even where no ambiguity results, it is better to attach *only* and *even* to the words they qualify, except in the rare cases where euphony forbids.

Irridescent and Idiosyncracy.—These are the two mistakes to which, I have found, good spellers most often succumb. Raymond Mortimer

THE HALCYON NINETIES

The Green Carnation. By Robert Hichens. *Unicorn Press. 8s. 6d.*

Mantel-piece and mirror: notepaper, perfume, wallet, handbag: some day Nancy Mitford may complete the list of words which slam the covers of Debrett for ever against their users. None of them, however, is quite so equivocal as "Society"—an expression which was constantly bobbing on to the pens of Edwardian novelists, and always with a rich purr of satisfaction. To be in or out of Society, it appears, was a permanent state. Mrs. Verulam, the heroine of one of Robert Hichens's early novels, *The Londoners,* found it, indeed, so oppressive to be in that she made her escape by compromising her reputation with a girl dressed up as a young man—luckily *le travesti* fifty years ago was only a charming foible. Many years before, Alfred Austin had already been moved to write *The Season,* a long satirical poem which reads like the work of the Man Who was Not Asked to Dinner; and finally there followed a host of friendly trifles like *The Dolly Dialogues,* which built their success simply upon the assumption that something called Society really existed.

Society was not aristocratic, one deduces, not greedy for money, certainly not intelligent. It seems to have been a kind of geometrical construction, with a few peers at the apex, a millionaire or two at the base, and the square on the hypotenuse filled with dimly acceptable nonentities fighting for access to the triangle itself. But the fascinating question which remains to be answered is whether the people who lived fully in the triangle were conscious of the fact. Or was Society, as I suspect, one of those lulling conventions peculiar to the novel, like the public school, the Tyrol, or the Great Country House?

The Green Carnation is an essential piece of evidence. It was published anonymously in 1894 and withdrawn from circulation the year after. For two generations, therefore, it has been a legend only; and the Unicorn Press is much to be congratulated on having at last cajoled a new edition out of the author. For not only is it a wonderful period piece, but also a delightfully amusing skit in its own right.

It is very short, and it has no plot. In time and technique it bridges the gap between *The New Republic* and *Highland Fling*—that is to say, the main characters are taken from life, and the movement of the book depends entirely on the glitter of its conversations. But since the talkers are mainly Wilde and Alfred Douglas—perfunctorily disguised as Esmé Amarinth and Lord Reggie Hastings—the glitter, agreeably pointed with malice, could hardly have been bettered by the real thing.

> "Do you know who the great Athanasius was?"
>
> "He was an excellent person, who will always be widely known to fame for his omissions. He did not write the Athanasian Creed. For that reason he will always be deserving of our respect."
>
> "It is very difficult to be young, especially up to the age of thirty."
>
> "We are never surprised when we hear that a man has gone to the bad; but who can fathom our wonderment when we are obliged to believe that he has gone to the good?"
>
> "I have never been out of my own country," said Mr. Smith, "except once, when I spent a week in Wales."
>
> "I have never made an exhaustive study of Welsh art," said Amarinth, "but I believe Mr. Gladstone thinks it gallant, while others prefer to call it little."

The weakness of the book lies with its single virtuous character: a tiresome stick of a woman, named Lady Locke, whose function is to disrupt the tinkle of conversation by a constant display of right feeling. Out of deliberate abnegation she is not, it seems, in Society. Not for her the intoxicating round of crushes, lectures on Mesmerism, *Faust* (an opera which appears to have played the same part in conversation as *Peter Grimes* to-day), and equivocal remarks behind an awning in Pont Street. Lord Reggie's boxes of lavender gloves, his frock-coat, his private hansom, leave her not cold, but sad. Without irony she asks herself incessantly one of Alfred Austin's harsher questions:

Can angry names
Like "battered beast" annul an Earldom's claims?

In the event, it turns out that they can; for Mr. Hichens the novelist soon shows himself at odds with Mr. Hichens the pasticheur. Lord Reggie proposes—it is the single climax in the book—and is turned down on ethical grounds. A painful injection of sobriety is thus bestowed upon the cheerful flow of nonsense; and Society is dismissed, for the rest of the season, to reckless indulgence in French plays, paradox and muffins.

For Mr. Hichens, in 1894, firmly believed that Society was a going concern. In spite of Lady Locke, the green carnation as an emblem belongs in his eyes to the world of fashion rather than of morals; and a very singular world it it. The acknowledged centres of leadership, Devonshire House, Bridgewater House, Spencer House, seem to have neglected its existence. On the other hand, its privileges were firmly guarded within a kind of zareba extending from Bryanston Square to Cadogan Gardens, and the least breath of scandal excluded all pretenders. A reputation had to be tarnished as carefully as a meerschaum pipe in order to achieve the right colour of notoriety without positive stain. Totally different standards of conduct were expected of women and of men. Visiting foreigners were watched with breathless anticipation and exposed to a strictly limited but damaging range of jokes. And it was this extravagant convention—like the equally extravagant convention of the Bright Young People thirty years later—which made it possible to write novels like *The Green Carnation*—or Firbank's *The Flower Beneath the Foot*. Nowadays, when the attention of writers is directed so forcibly to better things, when uninhibited frivolity is as rare (and suspect) as the high living on which it once depended, it may do us all good to catch at the guilty delight of putting the clock back to Mr. Hichens's perpetual summer time.

Arthur Pumphrey

COLLECTION AND DELIVERY

Taste and Technique in Book-Collecting. By John Carter. *Cambridge.* 15*s.*

Some men collect books; by books some men are infested. Some books are confined in cabinets; others uncontrollably overrun a house. It is of a few of the former, smaller class of men—the selective collectors, the literate bibliophiles, and of their precious prey—that Mr. John Carter writes. He writes with bracing directness. No book-petter, no spine-fondler, no aroma-inhaler, but a shrewd aesthete, he never sickeningly lapses into old-bookery. He writes of books as though their printed characters conveyed a meaning, and of dealers as though they were human. Conceivably, he himself is almost capable of reading a Giunta *Catullus* in a Corner House or a 42-line Bible in the bathroom.

In his definition of a book-collector he gratifies onlookers by assuming the defensive. He calls up a cloud of witnesses to justify the existence of the creature. And he decides: "The book-collector is in fact one of the assault troops in literature's and history's battle against the inequity of oblivion." Not content with that, he must bring in connoisseurship and talk of the application of knowledge and technique. (He is, of course, not the kind of man who in this context would use the word *flair*.) But mostly his definition proceeds by way of negatives. The book-collector is not just an eccentric who prefers one edition to another "for some ritually compulsive reason." He is *not* many things. Affirmatively he is almost too good to live.

By a wise dispensation of Providence the large-scale book-collector usually has money. And, having money, can buy taste and knowledge. From the *expertise* of others he can acquire a sense of values, and he can learn to manipulate the market. But Folgers, Morgans and Huntingtons are almost as rare as some of the books they vicariously collected. Mr. Carter's concern is not with them. His discernible purpose is to claim for more discriminating book-collectors and their panders the special consideration of mere readers. And—as soon as he gets away from his initial tendency to write as though he were composing one of those excruciatingly priggish essays on "The Position of the Artist in Society"—he succeeds in procuring assent to his proposition. Acknowledging the fact that book-collecting refined to bibliophilism is still rampant, we can be persuaded that it is not only harmless but beneficial to the community.

Mr. Carter has not here written what he must be fully qualified to undertake—a history of book-collecting, and he disclaims all pretension to supply a textbook or manual for beginners. Calling his book "A study of recent developments in Great Britain and the United States," he goes back a hundred years to trace the beginnings of his—art? science? hobby? profession? Surveying the past and present, and estimating the future, he expounds general principles and illustrates them by particulars. His skill and knowledge are unostentatiously displayed on every page. In effect he says: "These are the facts, this is the position, those are the things you must know. But be reasonable." His own sweet reasonableness is a check upon sentiment and enthusiasm. There is no aspect of taste and technique which he does not clarify.

His book, then, witty and sagacious and authoritative, is not for initiates only and not for neophytes, but for all who, addicted to reading, can condone the absurd behaviour which contact with books can induce in others. Those who read him must be on their guard. Book-collecting is catching. Luckily, most people are naturally immune from it. Francis Meres

ADAM TO ZENOBIA

Alphabetical Order. A Gallimaufry for the Diversion and Solace of the Ruminant Reader. By DANIEL GEORGE. *Cape.* 15*s*.

'Tis Happiness to be delivered from a *Curious*
Mind, as well as from a Dainty Palate,
For it is not only a Troublesome but a *Slavish*
Thing to be Nice.

Mr. Daniel George, from whose book I have taken this quotation, has a mind both Curious and (in the undebased sense) Nice. To Happiness I cannot find that he lays claim. ("The secret of happiness," he quotes from F. H. Bradley, "is to admire without desiring. And that is not happiness.") Like Cassius, he is a great observer; like Mallarmé, he has read all the books. Our best living anthologist, he presents in *Alphabetical Order* a collection of rare unhackneyed prose and verse passages from authors known and unknown (French as well as English), an Alphabet of Literary Prejudices, a fragment of an Imaginary Autobiography, and some extracts from his Notebooks. All this is good measure. It is also a warning to authors who, knowing how well they can conceal themselves behind their own writings, are emboldened to publish their commonplace books. No writer can hope to hide for long behind his reading.

I am not sure whether the index is more piquant for its entries (who, outside Mr. George, is acquainted with Benlowes, Boorde, Chalkhill, Hickocke, Hoy, Mounsey, Pryme, Vicary and Vines?) or for its omissions. We find, for instance, both the Samuel Butlers—rather more of the author of *Hudibras,* two Landors, two Thomsons (James and James), but no Thompsons, Haydon and Heydon (author of *The Holy Guide*), J. Bernard Burke but not Edmund Burke, Isaac but not Benjamin Disraeli, Miss Edgeworth but not Miss Eliot or Miss Austen, Mrs. as well as Robert Browning. Mrs. Browning's contribution:

> Lucretius—nobler than his mood:
> Who dropped his plummet down the broad
> Deep universe, and said, "No God,"
>
> Finding no bottom: he denied
> Divinely the divine, and died
> Chief poet on the Tiber side . . .

is, incidentally, a most fascinating study in punctuation. Here are writers on writers, on or over the borderline of malice; an anti-Dante by Byron; Arnold's "Burns is a beast, with splendid gleams . . . "; Carlyle's Coleridge, "a puffy anxious, obstructed-looking, fattish old man . . . talking with a kind of solemn emphasis on matters which were of no interest." Coleridge has provided one of Mr. George's favourite lines: "Varrius thus prophesied vinegar at his door by damned frigid tremblings." Part of a dream, of course.

To the men and women who people his landscape Mr. George's attitude is one of kindly but quizzical astonishment. No modern novel would house this quaint assembly: Mrs. Dards, who made artificial flowers out of fishbones:

> No one can imagine (she said) the trouble I had in collecting the bones for that bunch of lilies of the valley; each cup consists of the bones which contain the brains of the turbot; and from the difficulty of matching the sizes, I should never have completed my task had it not been for the kindness of the proprietors of the London, Freemasons' and Crown and Anchor Taverns, who desired their waiters to save all the fish-bones for me . . .

Mr. Mitchell, "whose flesh shook on his bones like a snail in vinegar" at the sight of a kitten; the sensitive Lord Stafford, who was similarly affected by roses; an unnamed gentlewoman who (Castiglione reports) was much troubled at the thought of being seen naked on the Judgement Day; Salvini, "an odd sort of a man" who, at his death, "cried out in a great passion, 'I will not die! I will not die! That's flat!'"; Tiberius, with "Joynts so very firm that he could force an Hole through a green hard Apple with his Finger"; Lord Bute, who "used to pass many Hours every Day, as his Enemies asserted, occupied in contemplating the Symmetry of his own Legs"; Captain Carlo Fantom, who spake 13 languages . . . and was a great Ravisher" (he was hanged for Ravishing); a certain "King of *Aragon,* a great Mathematician (but not much troubled with Religion)" who said "*That had God consulted him when he made the World, he would have told him how to have framed it better.*"

The maxims and reflections of this book, it seems to me, are intended for reassurance rather than for guidance, and with a little careful choosing between the red herrings a reader may find an attitude to his liking. Chesterfield pronounces on laughter:

> Laughter is easily restrained by a very little reflection; but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not enough attend to its absurdity—

Montaigne on melancholy:

> There is some shadow of delicacy and quaintnesse, which smileth and fawneth upon us, even in the lap of melancholy.

A certain John Langhorne, D.D., speaks of Sincerity: "The most unsociable of Qualities! Of all that is called Virtue the most unprofitable! . . . It is by the Exercise of a contrary Quality that the Harmony of social Intercourse is preserved." Dancing, according to Thomas Lovell in 1581, is not to be commended:

> What godly eye can it delight,
>   What pleasure in it dwell,
> Which is the line that leads to vice,
>   And hedlong unto hell?

Music: Collins liked his "Warm, Energetic, Chaste, Sublime." How many persons could hope for such a testimony? Nature? We may choose the anonymous Frenchman's "*Aimez-vous donc les beautés de la nature? Pour moi je les abhorre.*" On this subject English writers are apparently more cautious. England? Voltaire's account of a visit should be given only in full, and it is long. Let us take Dryden's

> Too happy *England,* if our good we knew;
> Wou'd we possess the freedom we pursue!
> The lavish Government can give no more;
> Yet we repine; and plenty makes us poor.

Shakespeare? Mrs. Cowden-Clarke provides an unexpected angle:

> The editor of "The Girl's Own Paper" having requested me to send him a contribution, I wrote "Shakespeare as the Girl's Friend," which was printed in the number for 4th June 1887.

This view is surely confirmed by a certain Johnson (not Samuel), who states: "If it were not for some of the old out-of-date grandames the young sparkish girls would read in Shakespeare day and night." I cannot tell in what spirit Mr. George has selected a passage about the happiness of the Toiling Swain, or about another absurd conception, the transitoriness of life. "O what a *bubble,* what a *puffe,* what but *a wink of Life is man. . . .*" Nor have I quoted Mr. George's observations on Books, Authors, Publishers and Reviewers; these are subjects almost too delicate and intimate to be discussed in print.

In the Notebooks Mr. George remarks that he would like to have been, for short periods, Voltaire, not Pascal; Luther (to see the devil), not Goethe; *young* Milton, Moses and Paracelsus on some occasions, and a few others. I find this a little half-hearted. Our own prejudices, miseries, quirks and oddities are the last things that we would part with, and I do not suppose for a moment that Mr. George would exchange his carefully acquired collection even for those of—who are they?—Richelieu, Rousseau, and the rest of his list. Actually, he is already not only Aubrey, Munchausen, Thersites and Mr. Nosnibor, but an ill-concealed *Romantick,* and a poet in his own right. (He is also Apothecary, offering recipes for beauty and chastity, for obtaining sleep, preventing ague, drunkenness, discontent, and other evils.) Meanwhile, there has been growing up in my mind a picture of the reader whom Mr. George will certainly Divert and Solace—a being slightly frustrated, harassed, misunderstood, quiet, sensitive, guilt-ridden, romantic. And for those who share none of these qualifications, Mr. George's book holds in reserve the still more subtle pleasure of being Provoked.

NAOMI LEWIS

FABER BOOKS
selected Spring list

poetry
The White Threshold
8/6 W. S. GRAHAM
Contemporary Irish Poetry
8/6 R. GREACEN & V. IREMONGER

fiction
Guns Wanted
15/- *Illustrated* J. K. STANFORD
Author of *The Twelfth*
The Lost Chart
9/6 NEIL M. GUNN
Time Will Darken It
12/6 WILLIAM MAXWELL
Author of *The Folded Leaf*
Crown Imperial
12/6 J. DELVES BROUGHTON
The story of Queen Elizabeth, the woman

detection
When the Wind Blows
9/6 CYRIL HARE
Blackmail in Blankshire
8/6 C. A. ALINGTON
Author of *Archdeacons Ashore*
Death under the Stars
9/6 VICARS BELL
To the Queen's Taste
12/6 *edited by* ELLERY QUEEN

general
The Richest Vein
15/- GAI EATON
A comparative philosophical study of Eastern tradition and Western thought
European Ceramic Art
63/- 216 *plates, some in colour* W. B. HONEY
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The Free and Independent

H. Kemball Cook, author of *Over the Hills and Far Away, etc.* In this account of the perils, trials and triumphs of the parliamentary elector, the author looks at British political history from a new and highly diverting angle. *Library of English Thought and Life. Illustrated. 8s. 6d. net*

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Selected List of Spring Books

The books marked with an asterisk are not yet published. In order to keep the list manageable we have listed only forthcoming novels, nor have we been able to include a list of reprints to which, naturally and rightly, after war shortages, publishers are devoting so much of their attention.

Art and Architecture

Cluniac Art of the Romanesque Period.* By Joan Evans. *Cambridge.* £3 3s.
The Drawings of Domenichino in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. Edited by John Pope-Hennessy. *Phaidon Press.* 30s.
The Drawings of Henry Fuseli.* By Paul Ganz. *Parrish.* £2 2s.
The Florentine Portrait. By Jean Alazard. *Nicholson & Watson.* 25s.
Georges de la Tour of Lorraine.* 1593-1652. By S. M. M. Furness. *Routledge.* £2 2s.
Landscape into Art.* By Kenneth Clark. *Murray.* 25s.
The Language of Painting.* By Charles Johnson. *Cambridge.* 21s.
Mediaeval Art. By Charles Rufus Morey. *Allen & Unwin.* 24s.
Murray's Architectural Guide to Berkshire.* Edited by John Betjeman and John Piper. *Murray.* 15s.
Nicholas Hilliard. By John Pope-Hennessy. *Home & Van Thal.* 10s. 6d.
The Paintings of Leslie Hurry.* Introduction by Jack Lindsay. *Grey Walls Press.* 12s. 6d.
Paragone. A Comparison of the Arts. By Leonardo da Vinci. *Oxford.* 18s.
Portrait of Canterbury Cathedral.* By G. H. Cook. *Phoenix House.* 12s. 6d.
Raphael's Paintings and Drawings. *Phaidon Press.* 25s.
Tintoretto. Paintings and Drawings. *Phaidon Press.* 25s.
Van Gogh.* By Philip James. *Faber.* 21s.
William Blake's Engravings.* By Geoffrey Keynes. *Faber.* 21s.

Autobiography and Reporting

All the Way. By Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. *Hodder & Stoughton.* 21s.
And Gazelles Leaping. By Sudhin N. Ghose. *Michael Joseph.* 12s. 6d.
An Autobiography. By Mahatma Gandhi. *Phoenix Press.* 21s.
An Autobiography and Other Essays.* By G. M. Trevelyan. *Longmans.* 12s. 6d.
Antipodes Notebook.* By William and Janet Beveridge. *Pilot Press.* 9s. 6d.
The Crest on the Silver.* By Geoffrey Grigson. *Cresset.* 10s. 6d.
Day After Day.* By Odd Nansen. Translated by Katherine John. *Putnam.* 21s.
A Life's Work.* By Margaret Bondfield. *Hutchinson.* 21s.
Musical Chairs. By Cecil Gray *Home & Van Thal.* 16s.
No Longer Wings to Fly.* By James Kinross. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8s. 6d.
Olivia. By "Olivia." *Hogarth.* 7s. 6d.
On Active Service in Peace and War. By Henry L. Stimson. *Hutchinson.* 25s.
Russian Child and Russian Wife. By Tanya Matthews. *Gollancz.* 15s.
Second Movement.* By Spike Hughes. *Pilot Press.* 12s. 6d.
Sixteen Self-Sketches. By George Bernard Shaw. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.
Sketch for a Self-Portrait.* By Bernard Berenson. *Constable.* 10s.
Strange Defeat. By Marc Bloch. Translated by Gerard Hopkins. *Oxford.* 10s 6d.
Thirty Dozen Moons. By H. J. Bruce. *Constable.* 12s. 6d.
Trial and Error. The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann. *Hamish Hamilton.* 21s.
Window on the World. By Edmund de Rothschild. *Peter Davies.* 15s.

Biography, Memoirs, Letters

The Admirable Lady Mary.* By Lewis Gibbs. *Dent.* 15s.
Barbara Bodichon. By Hester Burton. *Murray.* 16s.
The Conjured Spirit.* Jonathan Swift. By Evelyn Hardy. *Hogarth.* 15s.
Dante Gabriel Rossetti. By Helen Rossetti Angeli. *Hamish Hamilton.* 15s.
The Diaries of Franz Kafka.* Vol. II. 1914-23. Translated by Martin Greenberg and Hannah Arendt. *Secker & Warburg.* 16s.
Diaries of Tatiana Souhoutin-Tolstoy.* Translated by Manya Harrari and Alec Brown *The Harvill Press.* 18s.
Emanuel Swedenborg. By Signe Toksvig. *Faber.* 30s.
Goethe. By Albert Schweizer. *A. & C. Black.* 6s.
Great Villiers.* By Hester W. Chapman. *Secker & Warburg.* 18s.
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JONATHAN
CAPE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

According to a story which I suspect to be apocryphal, but which, since it has always entertained me, I hesitate to disbelieve, the late Roger Fry, that most delightful of men, was once informed by certain friends that, if he had never read the Bible, he really ought to do so. He agreed that he would make the attempt—for Roger Fry, among his numerous virtues, was extremely open-minded—and was later discovered lying on his bed, periodically convulsed by tempests of amusement. Holy Writ had surpassed his expectations; and peal after peal of deep Bloomsburian laughter reverberated round his bedroom walls. "Ha! Ha! Ha!," he kept ejaculating, *"Simply—Too—Extraordinary!"* . . . Fry's attitude towards the Bible was reflected by the attitude of his associates towards widely different questions—by Lytton Strachey, for example, who attacked the whole subject of Victorianism in the same not unfriendly, but cheerfully incredulous, spirit. The entire epoch had been "too extraordinary"—its religious faiths, its social customs, its sentimental reverses, its matrimonial mishaps. More recently, with the gradual decline of Lytton Strachey's influence, a succession of biographers has emerged, doggedly determined to give back to eminent Victorians the qualities that he denied them. It is even suggested that the difficulties under which we supposed they laboured are very largely of our own invention: that they were as estimable, well-balanced and level-headed an assemblage as they themselves imagined. Thus the indefatigable Mr. Hector Bolitho continues to make a courtier-like leg to the majestic shade of Queen Victoria, while Mr. Roger Fulford endeavours to replace her Consort upon his badly shaken pedestal.

Neither attitude will bear examination. The Victorians, though evidently less fantastic and preposterous than Lytton Strachey sometimes sought to show, were also far more extraordinary, far more remote from the present age in all their thoughts and doings, than is dreamed of by biographers who wish to deal a counter-stroke. We have less in common with our Victorian grand-parents than with not a few personages of the later eighteenth century; for, much as we may admire the material results they achieved, we no longer breathe the same pervasive moral atmosphere. That atmosphere would be hard to define; but in those who lived through the mid-Victorian age it produced very often an overwhelming sense of tension and anxiety. Such a sense of strain, in some instances stimulating and uplifting, proved in many others exhausting and demoralising. Weak natures were inclined to collapse beneath it; and Clough, a sincerely religious man, distracted by the constant struggles to which his age exposed him, wrote bitterly of the "over-excitation" of the religious impulse, producing an "irrational, almost animal irritability of consciences," from which he and the bulk of his contemporaries had suffered since their boyhood. In considering any Victorian writer we must make ample allowance for this disturbing element. Certainly we cannot afford to discount it when we are scrutinising Coventry Patmore, the laureate of Victorian married love and the most ambitious devotional poet of nineteenth-century England. Had his verses been devoid of literary merit, Patmore's life would still provide the basis of a fascinating personal study. He gave to the peculiarities of his age a strongly individual twist, and shaped himself, by dint of his literary talent, into one of the strangest of its famous men.

*The Life and Times of Coventry Patmore,** an enlarged, revised and greatly improved edition of a not altogether satisfactory book published fourteen years ago by the poet's great-grandson, Mr. Derek Patmore, contains a richly detailed account of his personal and poetic progress. Born on July 23rd, 1823, he was the son of Peter George Patmore, an associate of Hazlitt and C. Lamb, and of his wife, Elizabeth Robertson, a woman of Scottish descent, who set out to reform her dandified husband, and who disciplined her children with Presbyterian firmness. Under her rule Coventry grew up chaste, conscientious, hard-working. He shunned the example of his somewhat Micawberish father; but there was that in his temperament which even his mother's tuition could not quite eliminate. His amorous passions were unusually strong: ideas of love and the allurements of the flesh continually pursued him: and these preoccupations were the cause of many painful heart-searchings. Since it is better to marry than to burn, Patmore became engaged and adventured into marriage at the very earliest opportunity, thereby achieving a degree of happiness that for the next sixteen years continued to astonish him; and beneath the mild beams of Emily Patmore's devotion he embarked upon his lifework. It was to be a glorification of the beauties of married love: an identification of the link between man and woman with the relationship between the Soul and God. If Coventry Patmore had at any time been alarmed by pagan stirrings, here was a philosophy of licensed satisfaction to set his heart and mind at rest.

The Angel in the House, the poetic expression of his conjugal philosophy, began to appear during the year 1854. Once an immensely popular volume, eagerly discussed on both sides of the Atlantic, how many adherents can it claim among modern English readers? That it is minor verse we can scarcely deny. But few minor poets are so distinctive, so consistent in their design, on the whole so skilful. Patmore is completely absorbed by his theme; and from an opening poem, entitled "The Poet's Confidence," in which with a seraphic absence of false modesty he sets forth what he means to do—

> The richest realm of all the earth
> Is counted still a heathen land:
> Lo, I, like Joshua, now go forth
> To give it into Israel's hand. . . .

he proceeds to review the Promised Land by means of a long series of crisp Victoria vignettes. We enter a cathedral close—

> Geranium, lychnis, rose array'd
> The windows, all wide open thrown;
> And some one in the Study play'd
> The Wedding-March of Mendelssohn.

—breakfast and dine and hear a proposal of marriage, picnic at Stonehenge, attend Morning Service and re-live the agonies of a railway-station farewell:

> I stood by Honor and the Dean,
> They seated in the London train.
> A month from her! yet this had been,
> Ere now without such bitter pain. . . .
> The bell rang, and, with shrieks like death,
> Link catching link, the long array,
> With ponderous pulse and fiery breath,
> Proud of its burthen, swept away.

When a poet becomes the prophet of marriage, it is natural that the biographer should be tempted to investigate his own matrimonial record. Patmore's first marriage was exceedingly happy, in so far as he would seem to have loved his wife with an intense and resolutely faithful, if self-centred and possessive, ardour. His children, on the other hand, were very much less fortunate. Patmore and Pontifex had something in common; and Milnes, his eldest son, a high-spirited boy, "without a particle of vice" in him, but with a lamentable propensity towards untidiness and mischief, under the pressure of parental badgering developed at length into a downright rebel. Even the mother's last illness became a weapon in the father's hands; and Tennyson, the second son, who, though more tractable than his brother, Milnes, was not doing quite so brilliantly at Christ's Hospital as his parents had expected, was once the recipient of this appalling message:

> I write to remind you (began the anxious patriarch) of your promise to work hard and regain your place at the upper part of your class. . . . Remember, my dear little boy, that you are not likely to have your poor Mama long. Although she does not look very ill, she is really much worse than she was a year ago, and she is *sure* not to live very long. So you should make the best of the time you have to please her.

Emily Honoria, the poet's favourite daughter, who after her mother's death in 1863 made gallant and pathetic attempts to fill the Angel's vacant place, at last, after excruciating inward struggles, retreated to a convent, where she professed a fervid personal cult of the Divine Bridegroom, eventually dying of consumption at the age of twenty-eight. It may be that she had loved her father too deeply: certainly the love with which he surrounded her had neither soothed nor stabilised.

The first stage of the poet's career closed at Emily Patmore's death-bed. His wife had left him (Patmore was to complain) with an abruptness and a lack of ceremony that seemed almost inconsiderate:

> Do you, that have nought other to lament,
> Never, my Love, repent
> Of how, that July afternoon,
> You went with sudden, unintelligible phrase,
> And frighten'd eye,
> Upon your journey of so many days
> Without a single kiss, or a good-bye? . . .
> 'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.

She also expired with a flash of prophetic insight; for, as soon as she had gone, she remarked sadly, she knew the priests would get him; and get him they did, about the time he found his second wife, a Catholic lady in comfortable circumstances, whose quiet attachment helped to relieve his sorrow, and whose fortune enabled him to become the master of a roomy Sussex country house. There he initiated a new poetic period. Beside the wild raptures of *The Unknown Eros,* the domestic jubilation of *The Angel in the House* sounds tepid and conventional. With the advance of age, Coventry Patmore did not desist from his researches into the curiously involved origins of heavenly and earthly love. No clue was neglected; and we are informed that a complete collection of the publications of the *Eroticon Biblion Society* was accommodated—though unobtrusively—among his other reference-books. He made full use of the hints they provided, till his admirers, among them Gerard Manley Hopkins, felt now and then that he might be approaching a highly dangerous border-line The modern critic, whatever his faith and morals, is obliged to admit that their fears were sometimes justified. Crashaw had been reserved by comparison:

> In all I thee obey! And thus I know
> That all is well:
> Should'st thou me tell!
> Out of thy warm caress to go
> And roll my body in the biting snow,
> My very body's joy were but increased;
> More pleasant 'tis to please thee than be
>   pleased . . .
> Kiss, tread me under foot, cherish or beat.
> Sheathe in my heart sharp pain up to the hilt,
> Invent what else were most perversely sweet;
> Nay, let the Fiend drag me through dens of
>   guilt;

---

* *The Life and Times of Coventry Patmore,* by Derek Patmore. *Constable.* 15s.

Let Earth, Heav'n, Hell
'Gainst my content combine;
What could make nought the touch that made
thee mine!

It is easy to be malicious at the expense of the Victorians: it is less easy to understand the strange combination of innocence and experience, of obliquity and clear-sighted vision, of moral hardness and romantic sentimentalism, so often apparent in the conduct of their private lives. Coventry Patmore was an exacting moralist: he was at the same time an exuberant egotist, who seized what he had set his mind on with unself-conscious gusto. His wounds were deep, but they did not fail to heal: his sorrows numerous and genuine, but quickly put behind him or assimilated into literature. The second Mrs. Patmore went the way of the first: a third consoler appeared in the person of his daughter's governess, an attractive and shrewd young person said to have displayed some of the characteristics of the juvenile Becky Sharp. But Eros had not yet done with the poet; and, when he had reached his seventh decade, a final ecstatic love swept down on him. To Alice Meynell he gave the passion of a youth of twenty; but the cool and irreproachable poetess did not for long appreciate his erotic idealism; and Patmore's position at her foot-stool was after a while annexed by Meredith. Alone and palely loitering at the age of seventy-three, he caught cold during a solitary nocturnal walk and died on November 26th, 1896. "What about going to Heaven this time?" were among the poet's last words.

PETER QUENNELL

ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

Elephant and Castle. By R. C. HUTCHINSON. *Cassell.* 15*s.*

R. C. Hutchinson is an ambiguous figure on our literary horizon, gigantic, but blurred in outline and nebulous in substance. His admirers have made very high claims for him, and on at least two occasions, so the cover of this new book informs me, Mr. Day Lewis has singled him out for abiding fame. It is prophesied, in fact, that the wraith-like giant will solidify into a monolith, and that the English novel of our time may be represented for posterity by these colossal and far-flung narratives. Since no literary prophesy is safe, none can be safely contradicted. But we have the right to back our own fancies to the limit of our critical reputations, and I would happily lay odds of five hundred to one against the survival of Mr. Hutchinson.

A prerequisite of survival, it can be reasonably and confidently said, is that a writer should have done something which nobody else has or could have done. Above all other qualities it is their *uniqueness* which delights and heartens us in the great writers of the past. The very name Dostoevsky instantly evokes for us a whole wide stretch of the human imagination which that one man, and he alone, has succeeded in opening out for us. Creative art is constantly and joyfully proving to us that we live in an expanding universe, and there is, so far as we know, no limit to its expansion. For this reason alone it seems to me to be evident that the later you are born in human history the richer will be your inheritance. Other things being equal (and one of Mr. Hutchinson's rather superfluous intentions is to prove that they are not) it is better to live after Dostoevsky than before him. Can anyone seriously say that Mr. Hutchinson has contributed to our inheritance? My difficulty in writing about *Elephant and Castle* is that I cannot envisage the defence which I feel called upon to refute. Of an earlier novel by this writer it seems that Mr. Julian Huxley has claimed that "it has the quality of true art of achieving a vital reality." The defence is vague enough, but it may provide a floor to trail a coat on.

One thing must certainly be granted: Mr. Hutchinson's theme and intentions are high ones. He is in no sense a lightweight. Approximately, the present book deals with the marriage of a young lady from Kensington and the counties to a ferocious but good-hearted young slum-dweller. The heroine, Armorel Cepinier (all the book lies in that name), marries Gian Ardree from mistaken motives of self-sacrifice and with the mistaken intention of conducting him to more ambitious spheres. The result of her original mistake is a gradual poisoning of her own character and of her relations with everyone about her. She becomes a sour and unscrupulous egotist, much preoccupied with unrewarding activities against the Christian religion. Her husband, by contrast, turns gradually into a kind of Jo Gargery. Both achieve salvation in the moment before death. There are, of course, many sub-plots and hundreds of more or less subsidiary characters (for example, Trevon Grist, Elizabeth Kinfowell, Gordon Aquillard, Hilda Nicholedd, Captain Desterin and Everard Liske!). *Elephant and Castle* is seven hundred pages long, and the word "panorama" trembles on my nib. Mr. Hutchinson is a thorough writer, and he leaves nothing out. If there is a marriage, the wedding party must be fully described, with a list of the guests, an "atmosphere" and a great deal of *oratio recta.* If someone is required to traverse the Euston Road then the Euston Road must be evoked for us. These are the terms of Mr. Hutchinson's evocation:

> The mist was turning into rain, Euston Road was like the Neva, black and scintillant below the phalanxes of taxis surging towards King's Cross. Where the soaked fly-sheets signalled 'Colonies—Hitler's New Demand' a flotilla of umbrellas tossed like capsized coracles on the swirl of bread-winners draining into the tube.

An equal eloquence is displayed when Armorel's portrait is first painted for us:

> And here was perfection: the ripeness and the innocence, a body moulded faultlessly to wrestle or to float in the air: eyes where the eager light held steady as October sunshine, a warmth, a gentle and unconscious grace in the gestures of head and hands, in the way the lips and tongue moved, forging instantly the smile which the grave voice was to carry.

In fact, the *texture* of *Elephant and Castle* is quite peculiarly displeasing. Mr. Hutchinson writes with a lush flamboyance which cloys and sickens.

Yet it is not inconceivable that a novelist may fail in detail, only to succeed triumphantly in his total effect. Perhaps the vital reality which Mr. Huxley detected in an earlier novel may break through the enclosing crust of words to provide for us, her too, an ultimate illumination. But I believe not. We can indeed detect the writer's intentions without the least difficulty. He has wished to exhibit to us the calamitous progress of self-righteousness, and at the same time to suggest that the reason why the modern world is to be deplored is that we have abandoned Christianity. The book ends with two members of the younger generation reflecting on the sceptical aridity of their elders and looking forward to a richly believing future. The girl's father is about to be executed for murder, and she decides to spend the night in a church: the young man will remain in the porch, and he expresses himself thus:

> I know you'd let me share, if I asked you. Later on, sometime, we'll go back to it. Then I'll share as much as I can. I'll know most of what it was like. The pain. Not the sacredness. I won't try to share that. You see, I'm small, comparatively. I understand it. But it's all your own. You see what I mean?

One does, indeed, see what he means, just as one sees clearly enough what his creator means at any and every point of his expansive dissertation. But to perceive the intention is pitifully not enough. Young men who talk like this, young women who make the impression which Armorel appears to have made on Mr. Hutchinson, might as well be dumb for all that they can communicate to us. It matters very little whether or not we are in sympathy with Mr. Hutchinson's view of life. What we require from him is that our own apprehension of life should be somehow deepened. Mauriac's form of Christianity is far more extravagant than any that we shall find here, but Mauriac holds our excited attention because his vision is pure and direct. In *Elephant and Castle* the characters, the places and the situations are grossly *contrived*; any one of them could be dug out from the particular context of this book and rebedded without any loss of "vital reality" in almost any pretentious popular novel of our time. Once again it is a case of life escaping, despite, or perhaps because of, the superficial gusto with which the task has been approached.

Elephant and Castle has all the air of being a "great" novel. There are a lot of pages, a lot of people, a lot of events and a lot of purple. "Vital reality" is not a phrase which I would have chosen, but perhaps it may serve to describe what this novel utterly fails to exhibit.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

GOLDEN ROADS

Driftwood Valley. By THEODORA C. STANWELL-FLETCHER. *Harrap.* 15*s.*

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The complete and utter silence of this northern world fascinated Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher. The Driftwood Mountains changed every hour; their valleys and indentations, their invisible hollows holding waterfalls and lakes, grizzly bears and mountain goats. When the deep snow fell in winter, the world was dead; even the silence was "muffled by the deep snow that blankets the trees." The Northern spring brought jays and chickadees, mountain bluebirds and a variety of kingfishers, woodpeckers and sandpipers. Grey-headed chipmunks and squirrels woke from their seven-month sleep. At the time of the aurora, Driftwood Valley became a concert hall filled with wolf music, "high, lovely notes of sadness and longing . . . singing the beauty of the night, singing it as no human voice had ever done."

The author and artist paid heavily in terms of discomfort for the northern panoramas and the orchestras which nature performed for them. Mrs. Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher found it difficult to discipline her fears of being left alone in this Arctic desert: both of them envied those animals who escaped the bitterest cold by hibernating in warmth and security. I should have liked a map to guide me to this enchanting remoteness.

Christopher Sandeman's golden road led him to Peru, to Inca Land. He provides not only a map but a list of landmarks in the history of his chosen country, where his Portuguese ancestry made him feel at home. He tramped through the high Cordilleras, a camera in one hand, and in the other

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a vasculum for botanical specimens. The result is *A Wanderer in Inca Land,* produced in almost pre-war splendour. This is just as it should be. His photographs have an unusual beauty; they are well chosen and have effects of light and shade which lend glamour to the most tumbled-down shack and do credit to the architecture of a cactus valley, to the village market and storms in the sierra of Llama. And while these photographs are the book's main charm, his text adds to them, providing scraps of social, historical and botanical material. This is an expensive book to buy. But it is a permanent exhibition of photos to be looked at again and again.

Miss Freya Stark lures us to nearer, more familiar places among her Arab friends in the Hadramaut. *A Winter in Arabia,* now reprinted, gives us the privilege of sharing her visit with an archaeologist and a geologist to excavate the area round Hureidha.

Living intimately with the village people in the present, she was honoured by being allowed to live in their past. She was lent a very precious manuscript, "a sort of commonplace book", a medieval chronicle which she translated and copied, with the help of the local Qadhi. She celebtated with the village the Feasts of Ramadan and Zina and her readers will find charm and humour in sharing them with her as well as gaining unusual knowledge of an Arab community.

Richard Pearse was sent into isolated parts of the Arab world as a member of the Field Security Service of the Intelligence Corps. The words of an Army instructor were always in his mind. "REMEMBER that there is no such thing as fair play. FORGET that you ever played a game called cricket." The most personal conversation—and he made many friends—was potential intelligence material. The importance of a village was its underworld, "elusive and illicit, unspoken of and unknown, yet tacitly assumed and amongst the few initiates, admitted."

Three Years in the Levant is the record of his travels from the Turkish frontier to the Lebanese mountains bordering the Holy Land. It is written freshly, personally, with frank enthusiasms and frank prejudices. Political contacts and his own natural curiosity helped the author to uncover the fanaticism of Islam and the part it played in Arab morale and the Christian minority question; the underlying conflicts between the pro-French, pro-British and pro-Syrian groups and the cunningly organised Nazi propaganda which exploited both British defeats and bad British political warfare. Richard Pearse is highly critical of French policy in Syria. He spent days and nights in lonely frontier posts where his wits were posed against those of his French opposite numbers. He realised the disastrous results which would follow from the French shelling of Damascus. He was also strongly opposed to Zionist policy. On the other hand he deplored the "complete material stagnation" of his Arab friends and the maladroit policy of Britain in the Middle East. Palestine has now become Israel. Can this transformation, he asks, prove "the threshold of a new era, an era of rejuvenation and revival" for the Middle East?

Perhaps it was difficult in 1937 to wander into byways if on your passport was marked "Edmund de Rothschild. Date of Birth 1916." This author did the grand tour round the world, and *Window on the World* combines extracts from his letters home and his diary. The window was rose-coloured. Cabins with bathrooms attached; the beds spring mattresses; the soft shirts returned at once nicely starched. The author was impressed by the right things at the right moment; buffalo-hunting, game shooting, monastery-gazing, drinking tea with beautiful women and V.I.P.s and experimenting with opium only to find that it tasted like burnt chocolate. This is a light-hearted travel diary, youthful, enthusiastic, indiscriminate. They will enjoy it most who have themselves done this grand tour, living over again the experiences which conventional tourists have in common. And everybody will be pleased with the photographs.

DOROTHY WOODMAN

MASKS AND FACES

Collected Poems, 1929-1936. By C. DAY LEWIS. *Hogarth.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Complete Poems of Richard Aldington. *Wingate.* 16*s.*

The Collected Poems of John Gawsworth. *Sidgwick & Jackson.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The poet's naked face, when he lets us see it, is sensitive, troubled, and completely vulnerable. A fascinating spectacle to us, it is a frightening one to him. He seeks, therefore, for a mask to hide it; persuading himself, like Mr. Day Lewis in these early poems, that he is a tough political conspirator; or like Mr. Aldington, that he is a good, plain chap like ourselves; or like Mr. Gawsworth that he is a last spokesman of the great romantic tradition. And the mask, it seems to me—in spite of the views of Yeats on this topic—nearly always plays hell with the poetry. We get this sort of thing from Mr. Day Lewis,

> We're going out together, we've mingled blood,
> Taken a tonic that's set us up for good,

this from Mr. Aldington,

> As heavy guns take virgin trenches,
> So husbands smooth our way to wenches,

this (and much else like it) from Mr. Gawsworth,

> I fret a fury
> And erupt a sonnet.

We get bluster, or doggishness, or pose. The poet as political man, the poet as plain man, the poet as the Poet—these three volumes are worth reading in spite, not because, of the awkward roles which their authors have chosen to assume.

The bluff, unreal melodrama, which sits so ill on the shoulders of a gracious and wistful poet, was no doubt forced on Mr. Day Lewis by a too simple view of politics. Essentially he belonged, like most Englishmen, to the race of piecemeal reformers, moderate progressives, and sensible trimmers, but in the Thirties he could see no future in that left-of-centre position. Let me quote a good poem, making that point, in which the mask drops, and the face appears,

> Yet living here
> As one between two massing powers I live
> Whom neutrality cannot save
> Nor occupation cheer . . .
> Move then with new desires,
> For where we used to build and love
> Is no man's land, and only ghosts can live
> Between two fires.

These are the curves of elegy, of elegy for the liberal tradition, but Mr. Day Lewis, and very creditably, felt that nostalgia was not enough, so that a poem that begins with a supple, spontaneous amplitude, in terms of love,

> You that love England, who have an ear for her
>   music,
> The slow movement of clouds in benediction,
> Clear arias of light thrilling over her uplands,

ends with a willed stiffness, in terms of power,

> You shall be leaders when zero hour is signalled,
> Wielders of power and welders of a new world,

with a stiffness that flattens the curves. The points where these early poems fail, it seems to me, are just where power takes over the job from love, or will from imagination. What one admires in them is not their modish toughness, but rather the frequent promise of the mature and unpretentious poet of to-day.

Mr. Aldington's poems are fluid and sensitive notations from a rich experience, but they do not seem to me to condense and transform that experience enough. In his care to be clear and natural, Mr. Aldington becomes too fluent (it is prose, rather than verse, that should "flow"). When I read a passage like this,

>   the sudden departure
> From the virile earth I love so eagerly,
> Once such a sombre matter, now appears nothing
> Beside this weightier, more torturing bereavement,

I want to squeeze it down to

>   the departure
> From the earth I love,
> Once such a matter, now appears nothing
> Beside this bereavement.

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No poet, I feel, will ever reach the first rank unless he has this impulse to hack away words that are not earning their keep. Mr. Aldington writes of "red embers" and "grey dust," though the epithets, for a poet, should be implied in the nouns. War on the adjective! Yet this is an enjoyable collection. There is some specific thing that one wants poetry to do, that Mr. Aldington's poetry does not even try to do; but it does all sorts of other things remarkably well. The two long poems in this collection, "A Dream in the Luxembourg" and "A Fool i' the Forest" are, for instance, moving and readable; but there seems no formal reason for the first's not being in prose; and the second, a philosophical poem, shows the incoherence of the plain man's attitude. The plain man is impatient, afraid of being taken in, and therefore his philosophy is a set of abrupt inconsistencies. Poetry, one learns, is youth, and it is also a gay and charming fraud; scholarship has the clues, but scholarship is an old humbug; reality is ten pounds a week and a house in the suburbs, and how dreary reality is! Yet life is very beautiful! And so what? In the end, it is true, Mr. Aldington does arrive at something like a single vision, a mixture of hedonism and stoicism, held together by a mysticism that we must not probe too hard:

> Only from the purity of extreme passion,
> And, alas, the purity of extreme pain,
> Can you build the crystal world,

but though that is a tenable position, though these are dignified lines, for me they are too abstract and didactic. I am left wanting something more.

With Mr. Gawsworth, I am left wanting something less. Here our job is to sift the Poet's poses from the poet's moods. The former are a rich collection, including the Demon Lover, the Cosmic Pessimist, and the Poet at War with Society:

> Call me Citoyen?—
> My house is Bourbon.
> Call me traitor?—
> I am Arnold of Quebec.

The latter are moods of sensitive response to simple situations, like that of the soldier going back to the front:

> We say nothing; but think only
> (Heart-constricted, a moment lonely):
> "Who will be killed this time—
> And for what crime?"

Mr. Gawsworth is hampered by his vocabulary, a late outcropping of the rich conglomerate, or puddingstone, of the Edwardian decade. But behind the rhetorical facade, there is, when he gives it a chance, the lyrical impulse of a genuine poet.

G. S. FRASER

THE MAHATMA

Mahatma Gandhi. By H. S. L. POLAK, H. N. BRAILSFORD and LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE. *Odhams Press.* 12s. 6d.

Incidents of Gandhiji's Life. By FIFTY-FOUR CONTRIBUTORS. Edited by Chandrashanker Shukla. *Vara, Bombay.* 18s.

The notion that the great religious teachers have had a clear, fully developed and consistent philosophy of life is not confirmed in the case of Jesus Christ, Tolstoy, Gandhi or any of the others with whose work I am acquainted. Gandhi's influence was immense, and its impact, in cases like that of Untouchability where his object was to purify Hinduism, is direct and calculable. In most other matters his sayings could produce as much controversy as those of Jesus Christ recorded in the Gospels. I foresee a long series of books of reminiscences and collections of Gandhi's sayings and writings (including his weekly articles from *Harijan*) which will require libraries of interpretation. This volume of personal anecdotes by 54 contributors contains some triviality, much that is personally interesting, and occasional chapters which really illuminate the mental processes of the Mahatma. The editor had the good idea of himself writing a chapter giving examples of how, on different occasions, Gandhi made up his mind. There is much material in this book that will be of use to future biographers.

The account of Mahatma Gandhi, written by H. S. L. Polak, H. N. Brailsford and Lord Pethick-Lawrence is the best that has appeared. Mr. Polak, one of Gandhi's oldest friends, was well chosen as the biographer of the early period in South Africa where Gandhi first showed his great qualities of leadership. It is most useful to have in short and readable compass, a thoroughly reliable account of the South African episode. Similarly, no one is better qualified than Lord Pethick-Lawrence to record the last period of the Mahatma's life. His interest in Indian thought and his love for the Indian people are deep and genuine. He has himself lived to play, as Secretary of State for India, a vital part in obtaining the independence which he had for so many years desired for India. If his account of the final negotiations of the Cabinet Mission is somewhat disappointing, that is partly because Lord Pethick-Lawrence is the most modest of men, and partly because, in his official capacity, he is a little too close to his subject. The success of the Cabinet Mission depended on Gandhi's belief in the fundamental sincerity of Sir Stafford Cripps and Lord Pethick-Lawrence. When he believed, for the first time, that Britain really meant independence, he was ready to agree. I suppose we shall have to wait for some observant but less heavily involved participant in the events of the last phase to give us an off-the-record story. Some day we may be told in detail what happened during the private talks between the Cabinet Ministers and the Indian leaders that took place by the round pond at the bottom of the garden of Government House.

Gandhi's middle years (from 1915-1939) are covered in this book by H. N. Brailsford. Mr. Brailsford is one of the best living masters of English prose and he writes from the depth of a life-time's study of India. Much in these chapters will be unfamiliar even to people who have attentively followed Indian affairs. Above all, I recommend to those who wish to understand Gandhi and India Mr. Brailsford's chapter called "His Way of Life," which does much to elucidate the complexities of Gandhi's teaching.

The Mahatma, who acted as a recruiting-sergeant for the British Empire in the 1914-18 war, became increasingly and pre-eminently the philosopher of non-violence and racial brotherhood. He was also committed to *swadeshi*, which may perhaps be translated as the economic independence that is necessary for self-respect as opposed to the self-sufficiency which is associated with chauvinism. But Hindu nationalism was strong in him despite the fact that he sacrificed his life for the cause of racial peace. In conversation with him a few days before he died, I asked him how the apostles of non-violence, when they had induced the oppressors to depart, would themselves solve the problem of ruling without violence. Gandhi admitted that he had no full answer to this problem and referred me to a fair story by Tolstoy called *Ivan the Fool*. In the case of the war in Kashmir, on which our conversation mainly turned, he showed that he had indeed not solved his problem. To me, and, indeed, I think to most detached observers who had attempted to understand the Kashmir situation, the only alternative to a prolonged war seemed to be partition. The military partition had already taken place, and it needed no extraordinary prophet to argue, as I did, that non-violence must involve recognition of the *de facto* partition. The U.N. Commission and the Indian and Pakistan Governments have since reached this conclusion. Yet Gandhi was thoroughly cross—that is, I think, the correct word for his state of mind—when I suggested partition. As a journalist, he said quite correctly, I could not know enough to pronounce on such matters. Unfortunately, he admitted, there were some very important people indeed who thought as I did! He warned me against putting forward dangerous ideas on insufficient information.

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White Horses and Other Hill Figures. MORRIS MARPLES. *Country Life.* 21*s.*

When one small part of this vast and complicated world appears to have been finally tidied up one feels a satisfaction slightly mixed with regret. It is satisfactory to know that the last word has been said, the facts tabulated and the conclusions drawn, but how everyone used to enjoy the old disputes and the fierce partisanship that sprang from misinformation!

It seems that arguments about the ancient turf-cut figures that adorn certain chalk escarpments in the south and west of England must now cease; not because the facts are established, but because it is evident that they are unobtainable. We must be content to know that we do not know and are very unlikely ever to know.

These ancient turf-cut figures of England are four: the White Horse of Uffington, the Giant of Cerne, the Long Man of Wilmington, and —probably—Whiteleaf Cross.

What information have we? Very little. It seems that the valley of the little river Ock was called the Vale of the White Horse in the days of William Rufus; that a septennial festival to "scour" the White Horse was held until 1857; and it has been pointed out that this three-hundred-foot monster prancing on a green hillside is very like the little monsters that prance on the gold coins of pre-Roman Britain. There are some traditions connecting the White Horse with King Alfred, but modern archaeologists pay little heed to these.

Information about the White Horse is meagre, but it is ample compared to that which is forthcoming about the Giant of Cerne. No antiquary seems to have noticed him until 1764 and the few vague pieces of folklore are not very informative; for the rest we can see for ourselves that he wields a vast club and is blatantly a fertility deity of some sort.

The Long Man may be the Giant's poor relation or he may be something quite different. Whiteleaf Cross may be a Christian emblem or, just possibly, something else and older.

Conceivably all these might be mystifications of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries—the White Horse suggested by the name of the valley, the Giant a bawdy joke—but no one who sees these strange monuments will believe this. The White Horse with its spare emphatic grace fitting so admirably the lines of the hillside is a work of art, primitive, stylised, and intensely serious; the Giant is certainly no joke but a laborious work of magical faith. But to say that these two figures are ancient and pagan, more ancient than Christianity, is to say also that, through fourteen centuries of Christian belief, willing hands were to be found every few years to renew these heathen images. The White Horse, it is true, was made respectable by a legend that it was the symbol of the West Saxons, cut in the turf to celebrate Alfred's victory over Wotan-worshipping Danes; but how could anyone mistake an ithyphallic giant for a decorous Christian? Extraordinary though it seems, the Giant was almost at the doorstep of a monastery. What, one cannot help wondering, were these monks thinking of when they allowed this terrible old heathen to remain so close to them? We begin to realise that our ignorance of the Cerne Giant is only part of a much greater ignorance of the thoughts and beliefs of our ancestors. We can read the writings that have come down to us but how much there must be that was never written and so is lost for ever!

The White Horse and the Giant may both be ancient and yet may belong to different periods. Mr. Marples would separate them by three or four hundred years; he considers the White Horse pre-Roman, possibly pre-Belgic; the Giant he believes to be a Romano-British Hercules. The other two—the Long Man and Whiteleaf Cross—he thinks are medieval, perhaps landmarks constructed by monks to guide pilgrims to monasteries nearby.

Mr. Marples's guesses seem reasonable, but they are by no means the only ones that have been made; Flinders Petrie, for instance, would have it that the Long Man was the Hindu god Varuna opening the gates of Heaven, and a certain Mr. Black measured the Cerne Giant in much the same spirit in which others have measured the Great Pyramid. Mr. Marples assembles entertainingly the theories, probable and improbable, that have been put forward.

Archaeological interest is practically confined to these four ancient specimens of leucippotomy (to use our author's own word) but the book deals in detail with other more recent examples and supplies measured drawings of some twenty.

There was great white-horse-making activity in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Wiltshire. It spread to Dorset and Sussex and Yorkshire and even to far-off Aberdeenshire. There is the Whipsnade lion, there is Blériot's aeroplane at Dover; there is a kiwi which was originally a regimental badge but is now maintained by a boot-polish firm, there is an exhortation to "Drink More Milk" on Fovant Down. All these are carefully recorded. More interesting is the information about the Red Horse at Tysoe which may have been genuinely ancient but which has now disappeared.

Mr. Marples is an enthusiast for white horses and so he tells us was his father, who himself constructed the most recent one on the list—a gently pacing nag which decorates a down near Pewsey. This is an enthusiast's book, but it is a well-written, judicious, and interesting one. It has also every appearance of being—as far as one can forsee the future—the final book on the subject.

STEPHEN BONE

SHORT STORIES

Dark Avenues. By IVAN BUNIN. *Lehmann.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

The Wrong Set. By ANGUS WILSON. *Secker & Warburg.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Nightingales Sing. By ELIZABETH PARSONS. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Short Stories Russian, English and American, erotic, satirical, and nondescript; there is a good deal to be learnt from these books. M. Bunin is of course an acknowledged master, and he teaches the classic lessons of compression, narrative force, and dramatic point. The reader is drawn into the story at once; a life history has been sketched, a situation presented, an atmosphere created, in a few sentences. The stories are easy to read, but one's attention is challenged by a bold use of dramatic ellipsis. And for all that the narrative moves forward so urgently, it is not hurried. Nothing is left out; the action is enriched by a deeply felt, poetic sense of place. As to content, the best stories are those which have as their titles the names of girls—*Musa, Tanya, Natalya*—elegies upon old love affairs.

Mais non, — ma jeunesse est finie . . .
Adieu, doux rayon qui m'a lui, —

But they are not nostalgic: they are saved from that by Bunin's sensuousness, his erotic realism, his brilliant evocations of passion and *volupté*. They echo, rather, the agonised raptures of Alexis Ivanovitch in *The Gambler* or of Grisha in *Smoke*. To have caught this echo within the compass of a short story is remarkable, and this late flowering of a great tradition gives an admirable catholicity to the Modern European Library, a new series in which it appears with works by Sartre and Juenger. Bunin was born in 1870, and these stories, we are told, were all written between 1938 and 1944. The dominant theme presumably represents a phase of interest, and (unless perhaps to those who are passing through a similar phase) the repetition tends to dull the flavour. I recommend therefore that this book should be treated like a bottle of Benedictine, and taken a glass or two at a time.

The economy demanded by the short story —that economy in establishing characters and managing the action in which they are involved— makes this form a difficult medium for the satirist. The difficulty is that if economy results in the creation of characters whose sole *raison d'être* is to be the object of satire, they will not have sufficient personality to be credible or interesting. Some of Mr. Angus Wilson's stories are failures for this reason. Those which are successful are the ones in which there is some relief; for example where the characters have qualities other than those which are the main targets of satire, even when these qualities are secondary targets. Jennie, in *Crazy Crowd*, is credible and interesting because, apart from the artificial, posing "craziness" which she shares with her family (main target), she is a solemn little prig (secondary target), and more important, because she is in love with Peter, and can emerge from craziness and priggishness because she loves him. *Crazy Crowd* is a real achievement, both as a story, and as satire, with the characters revealing their awfulness with what is made to appear as almost masochistic eagerness. It is an essential quality in effective satire that it should give one a real sense that a fight is going on against the qualities which are satirised; in *Crazy Crowd* this is admirably done. Peter is fighting; in the end, in fact, he wins, and so far as Jennie is concerned craziness has been defeated. A flat description of silly or disgusting behaviour is not satire, and a story such as *Union Reunion* seems to me to be as vulgar as the behaviour which it describes, and as pointless. Mr. Wilson however seems to have a taste for brutality, or possibly an absence of taste which indulges it; and the climax of *Raspberry Jam*, when a little boy who has become involved with two mad old ladies is a witness to their lunatic cruelty to a bullfinch, is only the worst example of what I consider to be a puzzling and serious fault in his work.

Miss Elizabeth Parsons, according to her publishers, has a talent that reminds the reader irresistably of the works of Katharine Mansfield. This is a very dangerous kind of advertisement, particularly when all that the subject has in common with the original are in fact some of the weaknesses. It invites demolition, and is thus unfair to Miss Parsons' work, in which there is nothing to attract hostility, unless one is already hostile to that kind of refinement which regards a point in a story as an intrusion. But to do the kind of story at which Miss Parsons aims one must have a *real* sensibility, a sensitivity to character and atmosphere which is sometimes found in invalids and the blind and which is, in a writer, the sign of a special kind of talent. Talent of this kind does exist, but it is truly rare, and Miss Parsons has not got it. Her sensibility is diffuse, and although these are quite nice, intelligent stories, they would be improved by a more direct approach and more robust handling. Miss Parsons can in fact hold attention when she describes a voyage in a leaking boat, but one feels that she considers this to be cheap, and the result is that she produces nothing above a "sensitive-distinguished" variant of women's magazine stories.

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